

WE'LL SOON BE HOME AGAIN



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BAB BONDE

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BERGTING

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BE HOME AGAIN**

Jessica Bab Bonde

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Story
Jessica Bab Bonde
Art
Peter Bergting

Translation
Jessica Bab Bonde & Sunshine Barbito
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Kathryn Renta



DARK HORSE BOOKS



**To those who have made me who I am and given
me the opportunity to live and breathe freely.**

—JBB

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Originally published in Sweden by Natur & Kultur, 2018

Published by Dark Horse Books, a division of Dark Horse Comics LLC
10956 SE Main Street Milwaukie, OR 97222

DarkHorse.com
Advertising Sales: (503) 905-2315
Comic Shop Locator Service: Comicshoplocator.com

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bab Bonde, Jessica, author. | Bergting, Peter, artist. | Barbito, Sunshine, translator. | Renta, Kathryn S., letterer.

Title: We'll soon be home again / story, Jessica Bab Bonde ; art, Peter Bergting ; translation, Jessica Bab Bonde & Sunshine Barbito ; letterer, Kathryn Renta.

Other titles: Vi kommer snart hem igen. English | We will soon be home again

Description: Milwaukie, OR : Dark Horse Books, 2020. | Audience: Ages 12+ |

Audience: Grades 7-9 | Summary: Based on interviews with six Holocaust survivors, these first-person point of view stories relate living through the de-humanization and starvation in concentration camps and the industrial-scale mass murder in extermination camps.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019043599 (print) | LCCN 2019043600 (ebook) | ISBN 9781506715490 (paperback) | ISBN 9781506715667 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Graphic novels. | CYAC: Graphic novels. | Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Fiction. | Survival--Fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.7.B157 We 2020 (print) | LCC PZ7.7.B157 (ebook) | DDC 741.5/9485--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019043599>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019043600>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	6
Tobias.....	11
Livia.....	29
Selma.....	47
Susanna.....	57
Emerich.....	75
Elisabeth.....	87
Timeline.....	96
Glossary.....	98
Want to Know More?.....	99
Thanks.....	100

FOREWORD

Tobias, Livia, Selma, Susanna, Emerich, and Elisabeth. Their lives started just like mine or yours. It's possible they were even more lucky than you are. They were all born into safety and comfort with family and friends around. They had homes, they had food and clothes. They had the same thoughts and troubles that all children do. They had freedom and were able to grow, play with friends, and some of them would start school, others would even start university. Not any happier or any sadder than other children. They lived just like you and I do.

Then, suddenly, their lives started to change. For some, the change was slow. So slow that they hardly noticed it. They weren't allowed on certain streets, couldn't play with children in the parks, and maybe had to quit school. For some, it all happened overnight. They were forced to move to other parts of their cities and to live squeezed in together with people they didn't know. They couldn't work or go to school. They had no money and hardly any food. Soon, all joy, comfort, and everyday life was taken from them. Soon there was only fear and fighting for their lives.

All of them lost parents, siblings, best friends, homes, clothes, favorite things. More or less, their whole lives. How could that happen? Could that happen to us? To you and me?

While all of this happened, life went on like usual for many people, as though nothing had happened at all. Some of them would protest. They'd speak out about what they found strange or wrong. For example, that their friends, colleagues, and classmates were no longer allowed to work or study simply because they were Jewish. Simply because, in one way or another, they deviated from what the rulers claimed was "normal." But there weren't enough who took a stand. Too many didn't care, too many did not sympathize with the ones being exposed. Too many looked the other way and were happy as long as nothing happened to them or their families.

I believe that these things can happen to us, to you and me and to our families. In other places around the world, but also here in our country. Unfortunately, I believe it could happen easily. It can happen when we stop caring about how we treat each other, about what's okay and what's not okay to do.

Tobias, Livia, Selma, Susanna, Emerich, and Elisabeth have told us about their lives, so that you will get the chance to understand what can happen if we are not careful with the freedom that we have today. We cannot take the right to live freely for granted. If we are to think

freely as we choose to, we must also let others think and believe as they want to. Sometimes it's difficult to accept that another's beliefs may be different from ours, even challenging to ours. But we must live side by side. Sometimes that might seem like a bad idea. But to coexist peacefully is much better than having someone take your freedoms away, to violate your human rights, because of your own beliefs. You and me and our friends, we are all responsible for our world, and how we want it to be. We have to share that responsibility. Together.

Jonna Bro Bande
Stockholm, Sweden
October 2017



GHETTO I LODZ

Tobias

MY MOTHER'S NAME WAS ESTER.

MUM AND DAD HAD A GROCERY STORE IN LODZ. THE STORE WAS ALL WE HAD.

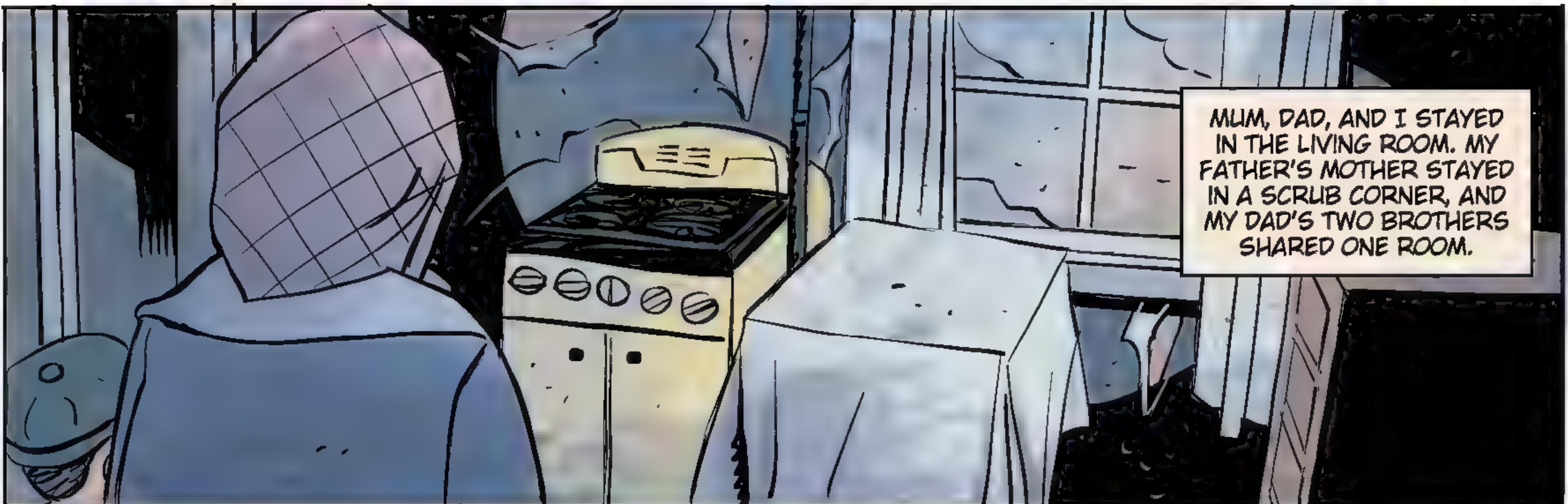
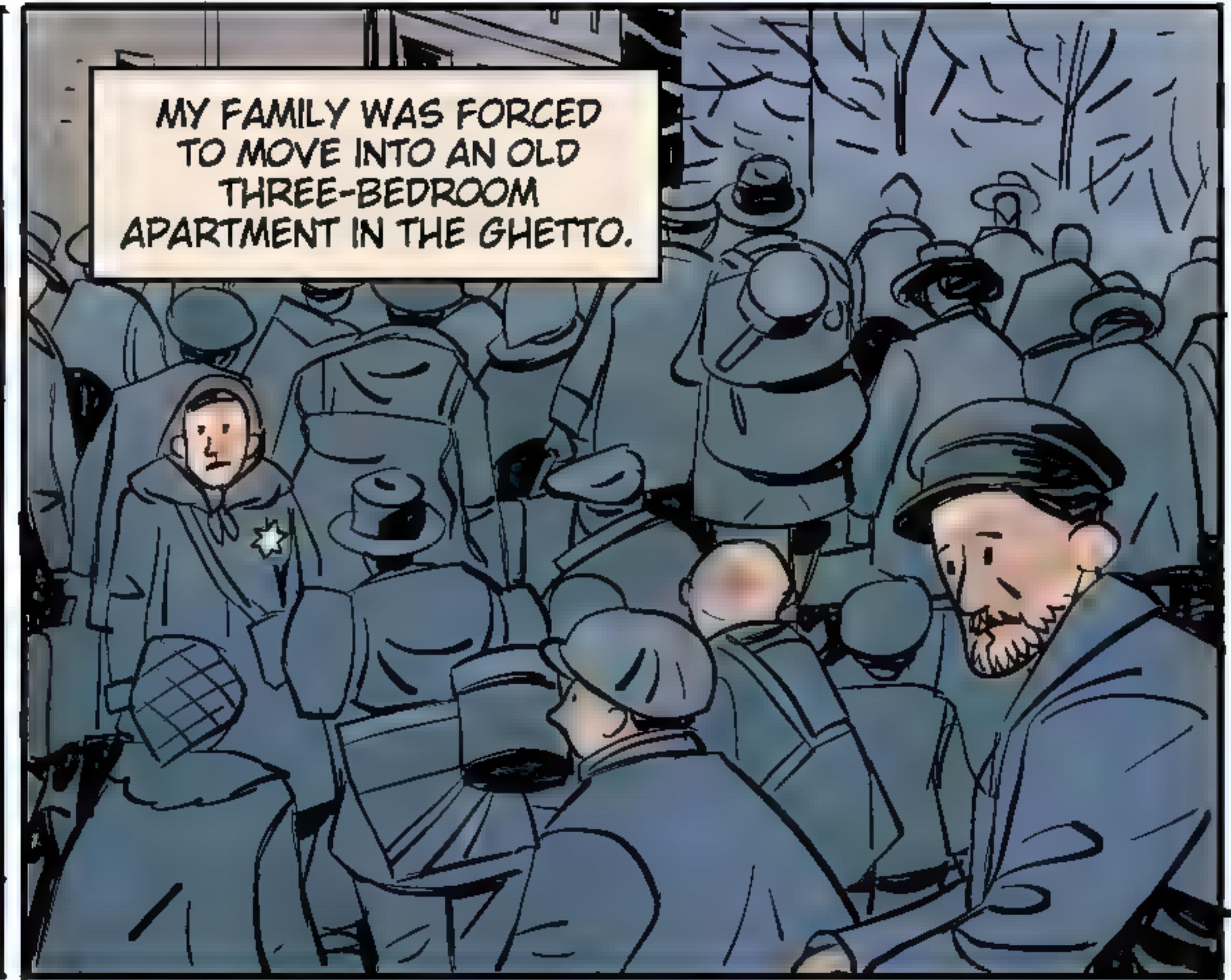
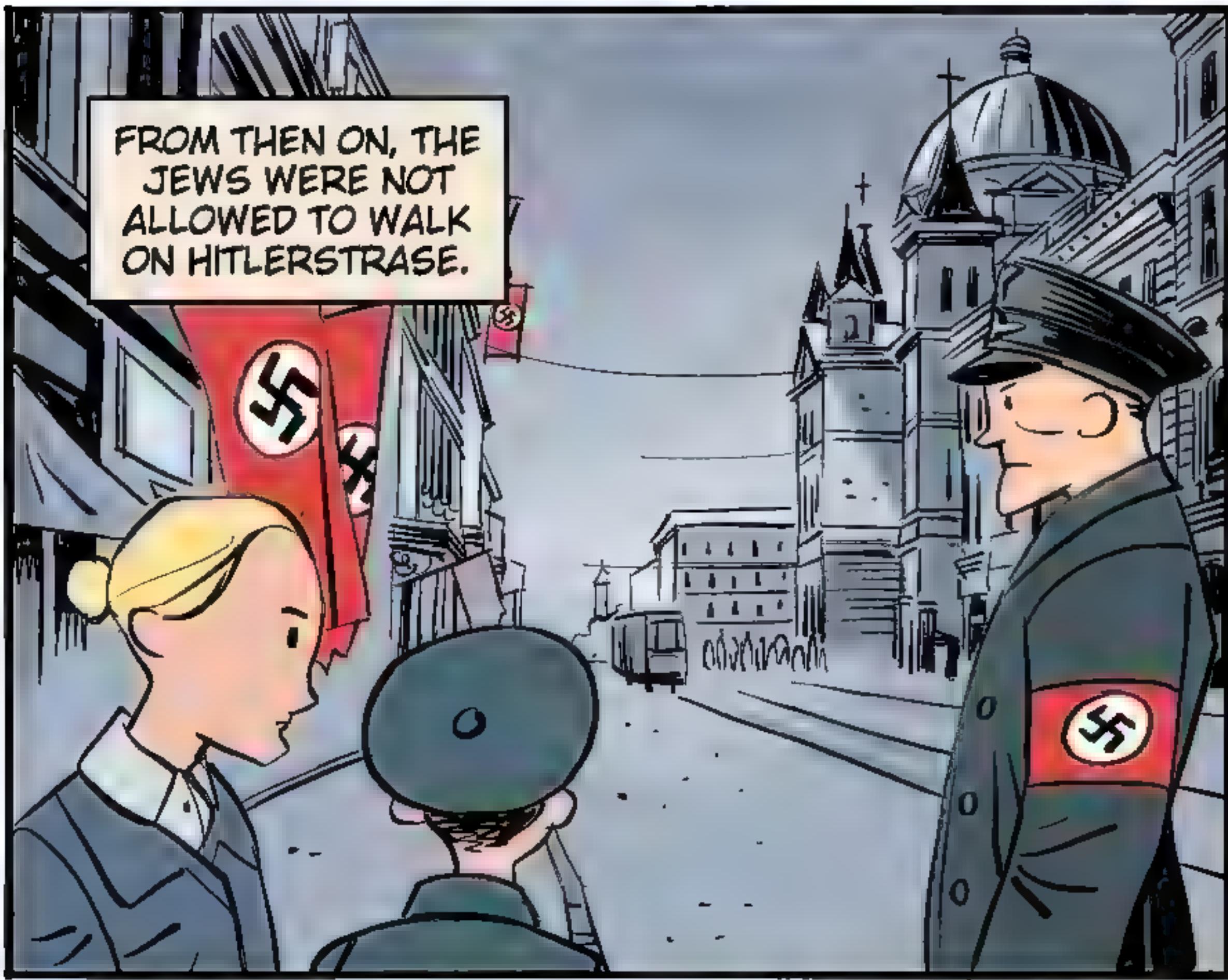
IN THE SUMMERS, MY MUM AND I WOULD GO UP TO THE MOUNTAINS, TO ZAKOPANE.

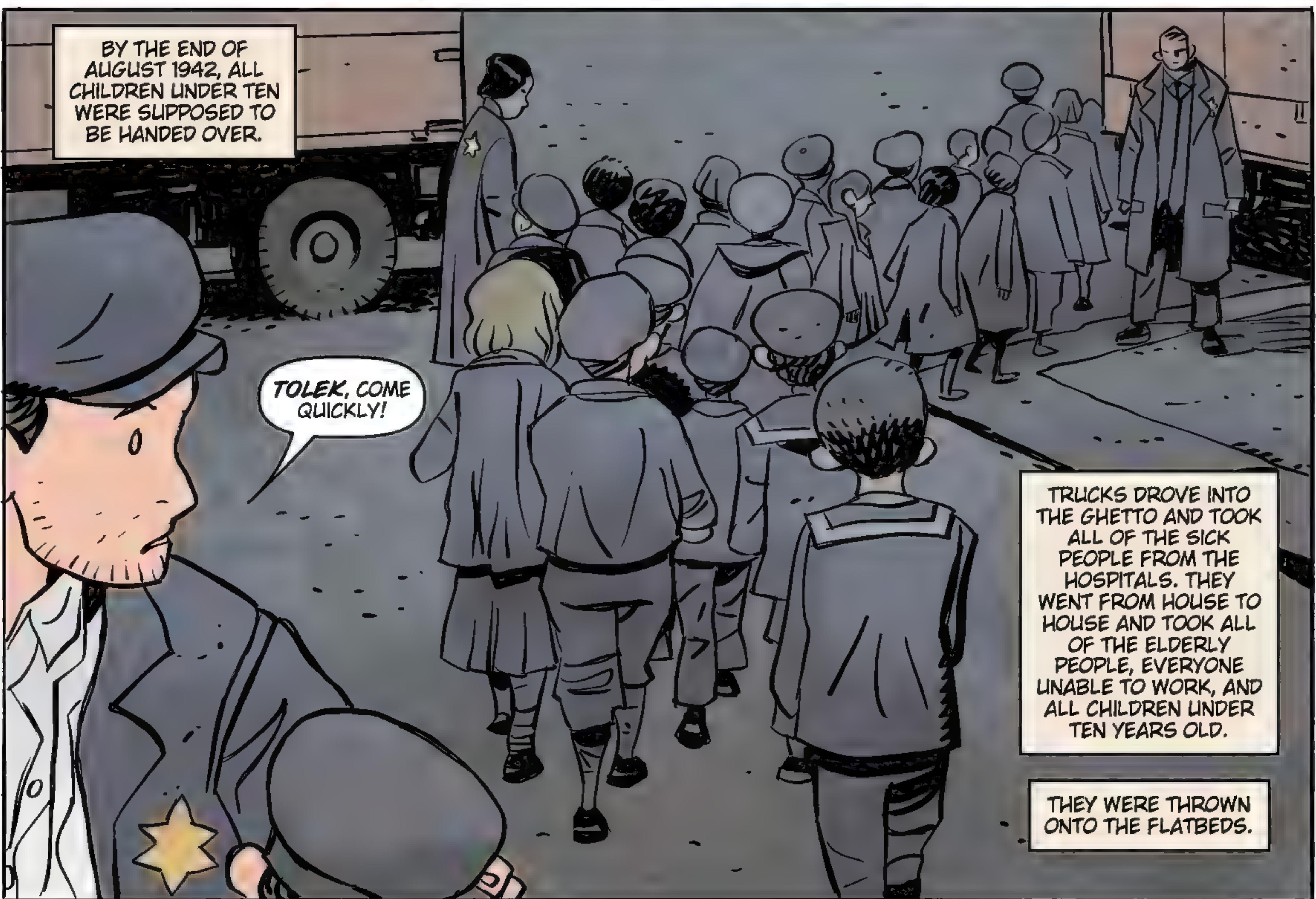
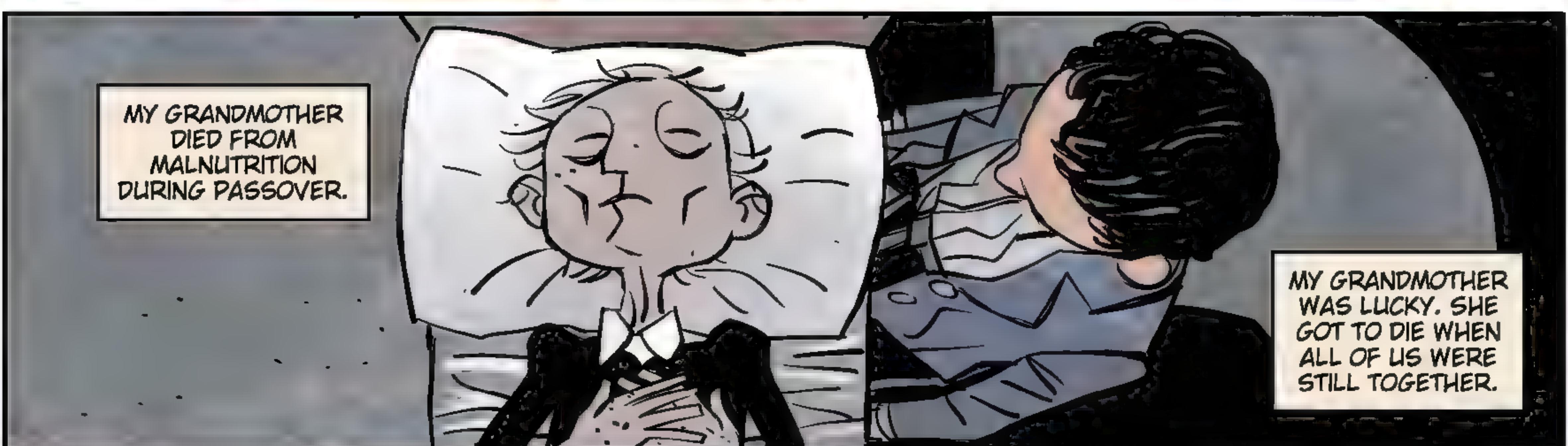
IN ZAKOPANE, THERE WAS FRESH AIR AND WE COULD REST. WHILE WE WERE GONE, DAD TOOK CARE OF THE STORE.

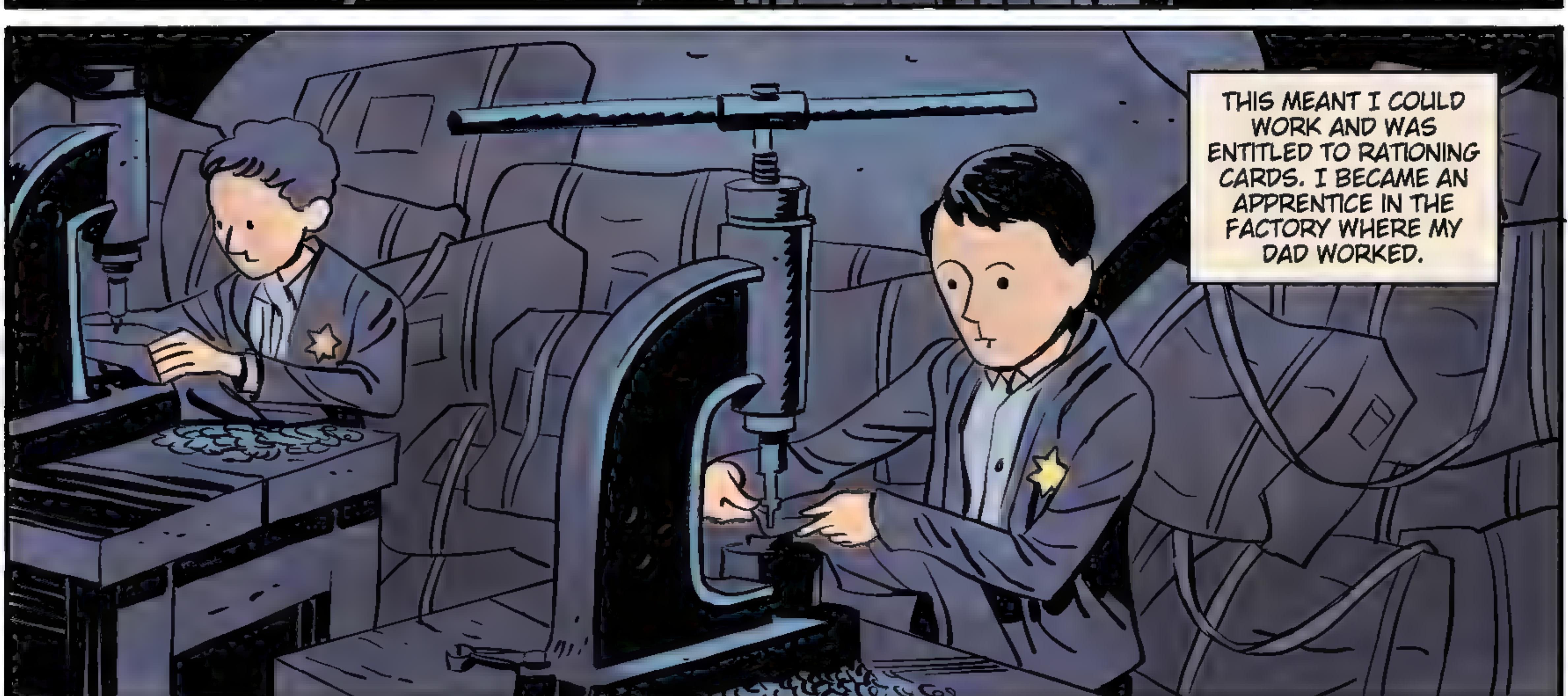
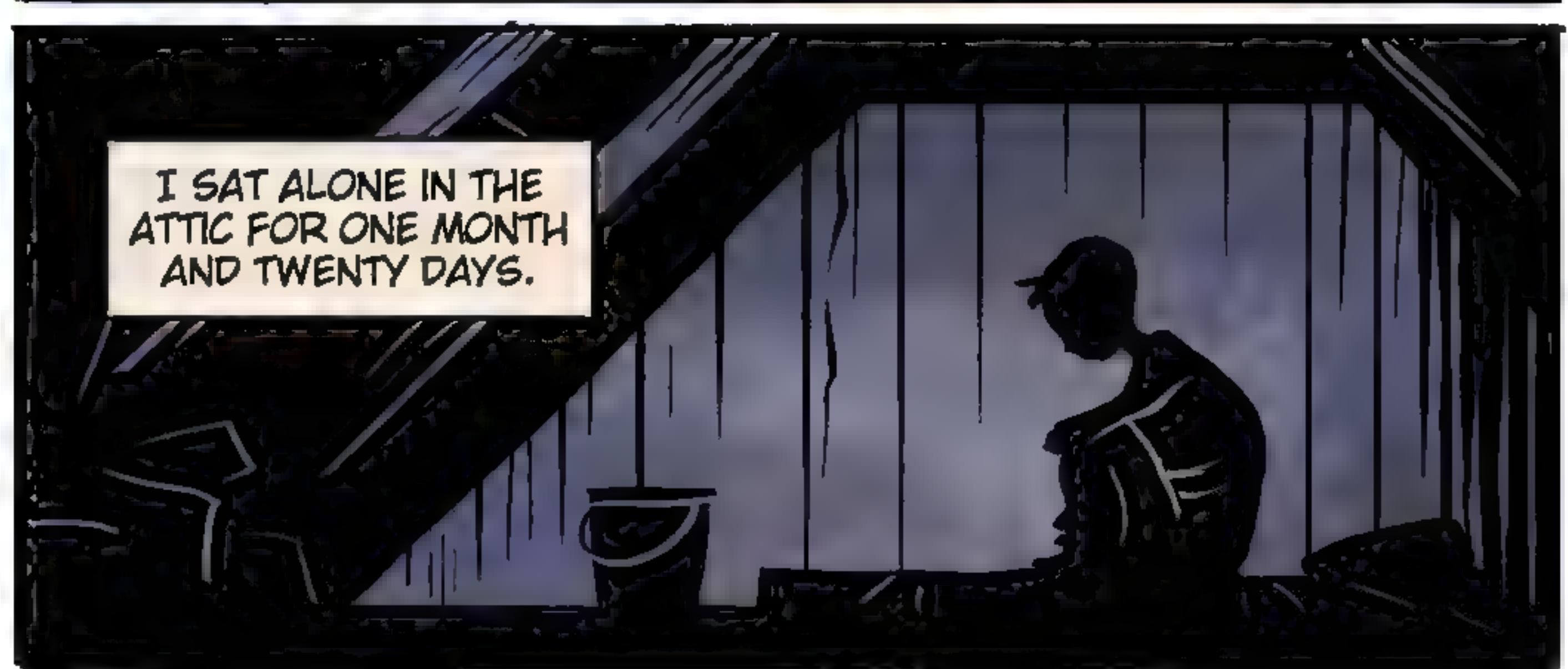
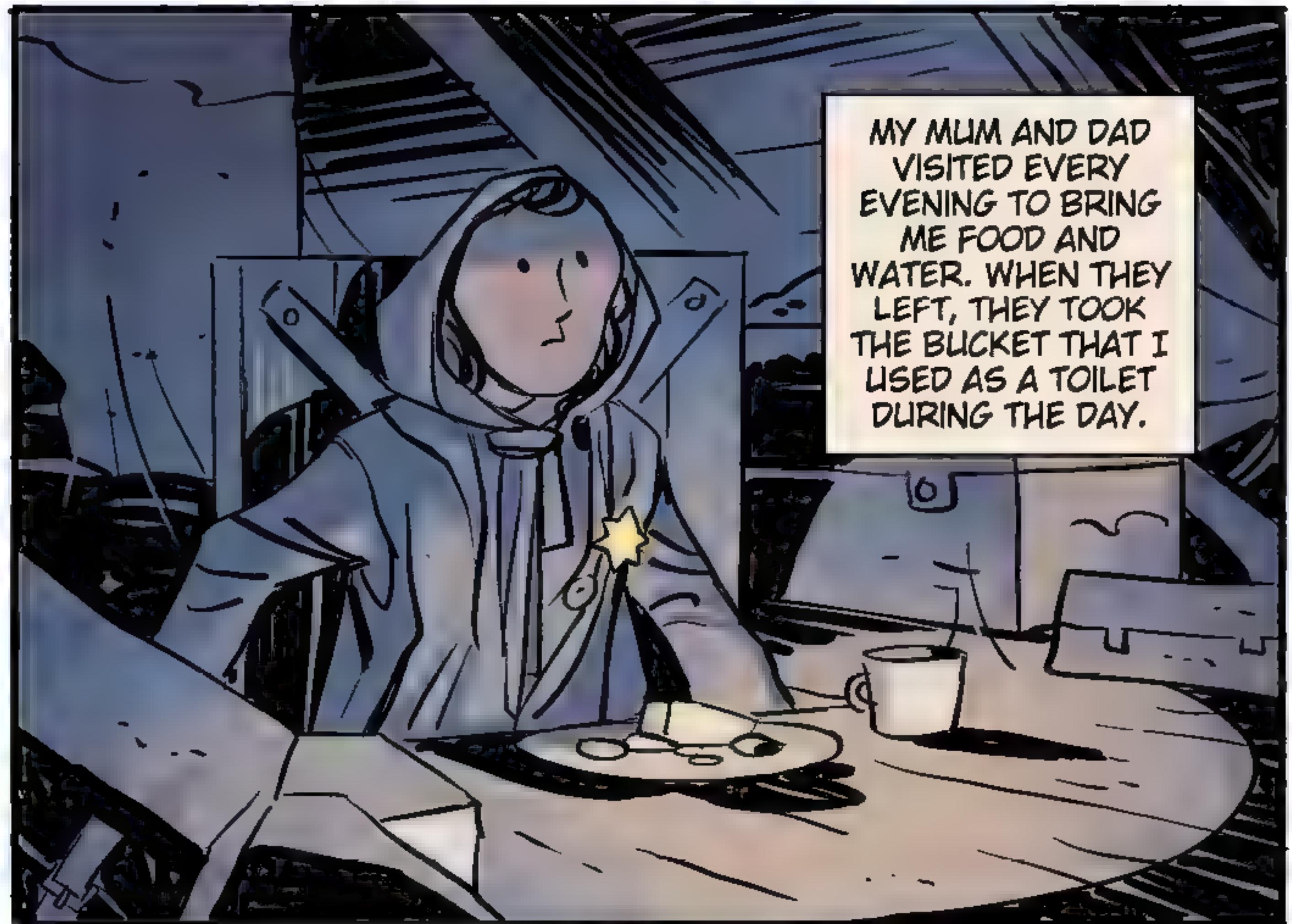
IN THE AUTUMN OF 1939, LODZ BECAME A GERMAN CITY.

THE MAIN STREET'S NAME CHANGED TO HITLERSTRASE. THE GERMANS THOUGHT THAT ALL JEWS IN LODZ SHOULD LIVE IN THE SAME AREA.

THAT AREA WAS CALLED THE GHETTO.







I WAS ALIVE. I HAD SURVIVED. I WAS WORKING IN THE GHETTO.

TRANSPORT AFTER TRANSPORT LEFT, MOSTLY FOR AUSCHWITZ. BUT NO ONE HAD A CLUE WHAT WAS GOING ON THERE.

ONE CHILD IN ONE THOUSAND SURVIVED THE GHETTO IN LODZ AND THE TIME THEREAFTER. I WAS ONE OF THE CHILDREN THAT SURVIVED.

I OFTEN THINK OF HOW LUCKY I AM.



IN THE GHETTO, THERE WAS AN OFFICER. FRANZ SEIFFERT. BY THE AUTUMN OF 1944, HE REALIZED THAT THE GERMANS WERE LOSING THE WAR ...

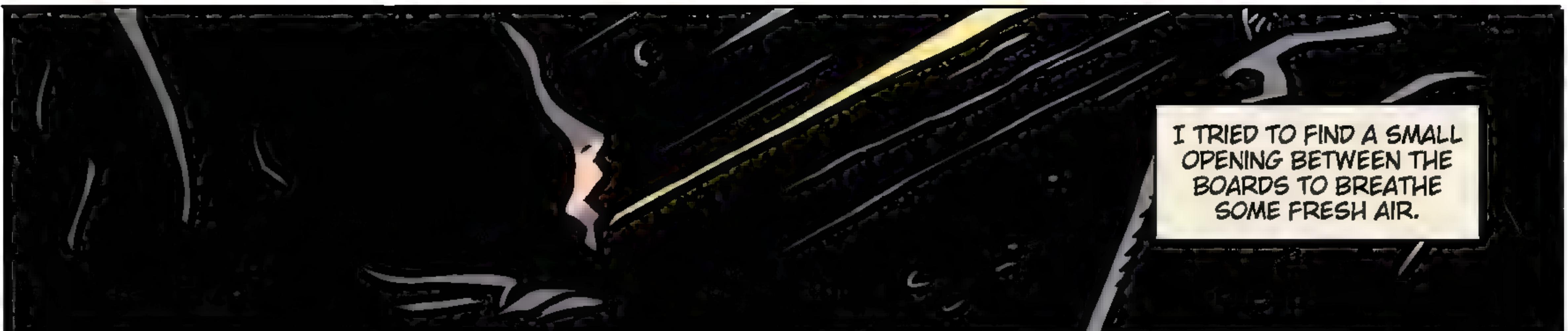
...AND HE WANTED TO GET AWAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

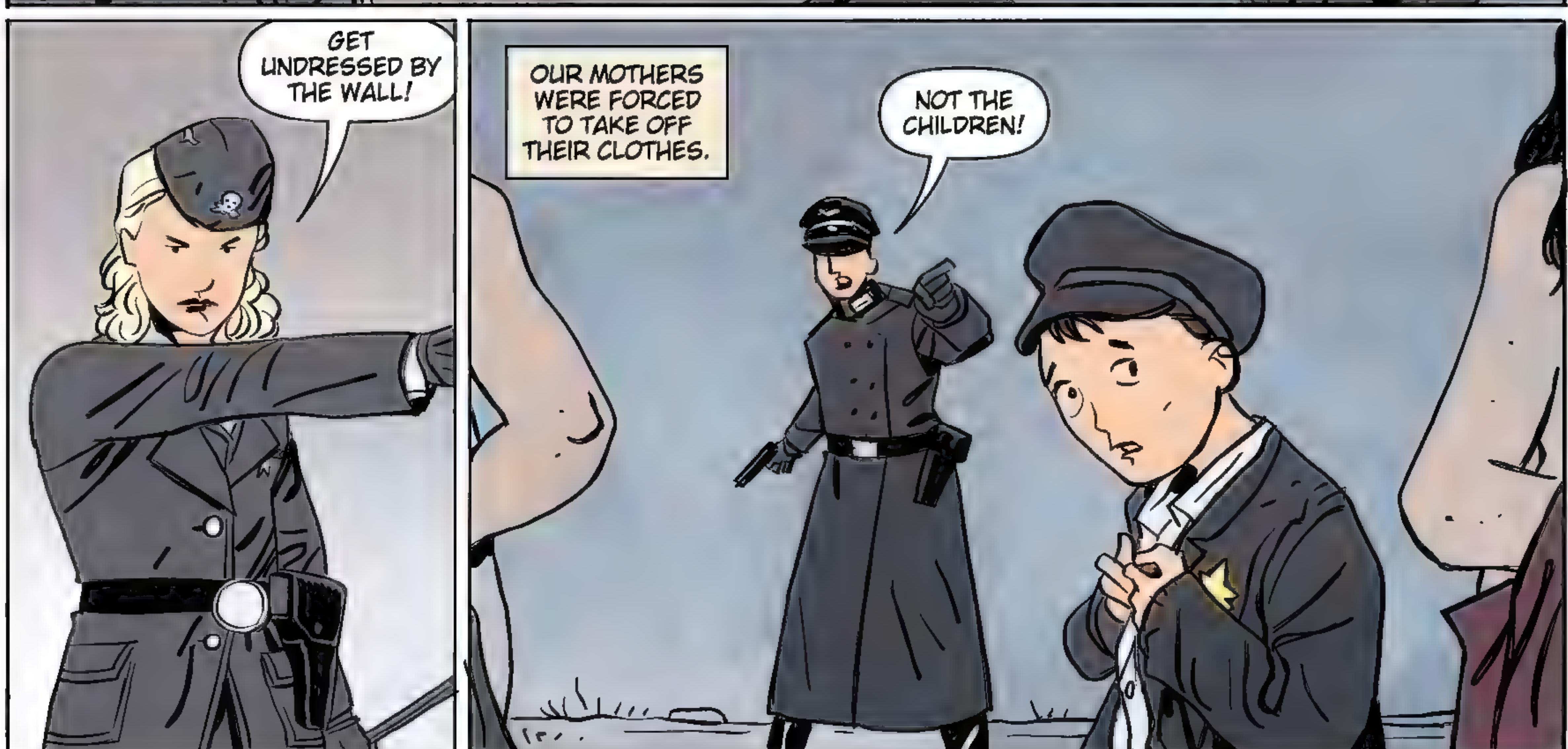
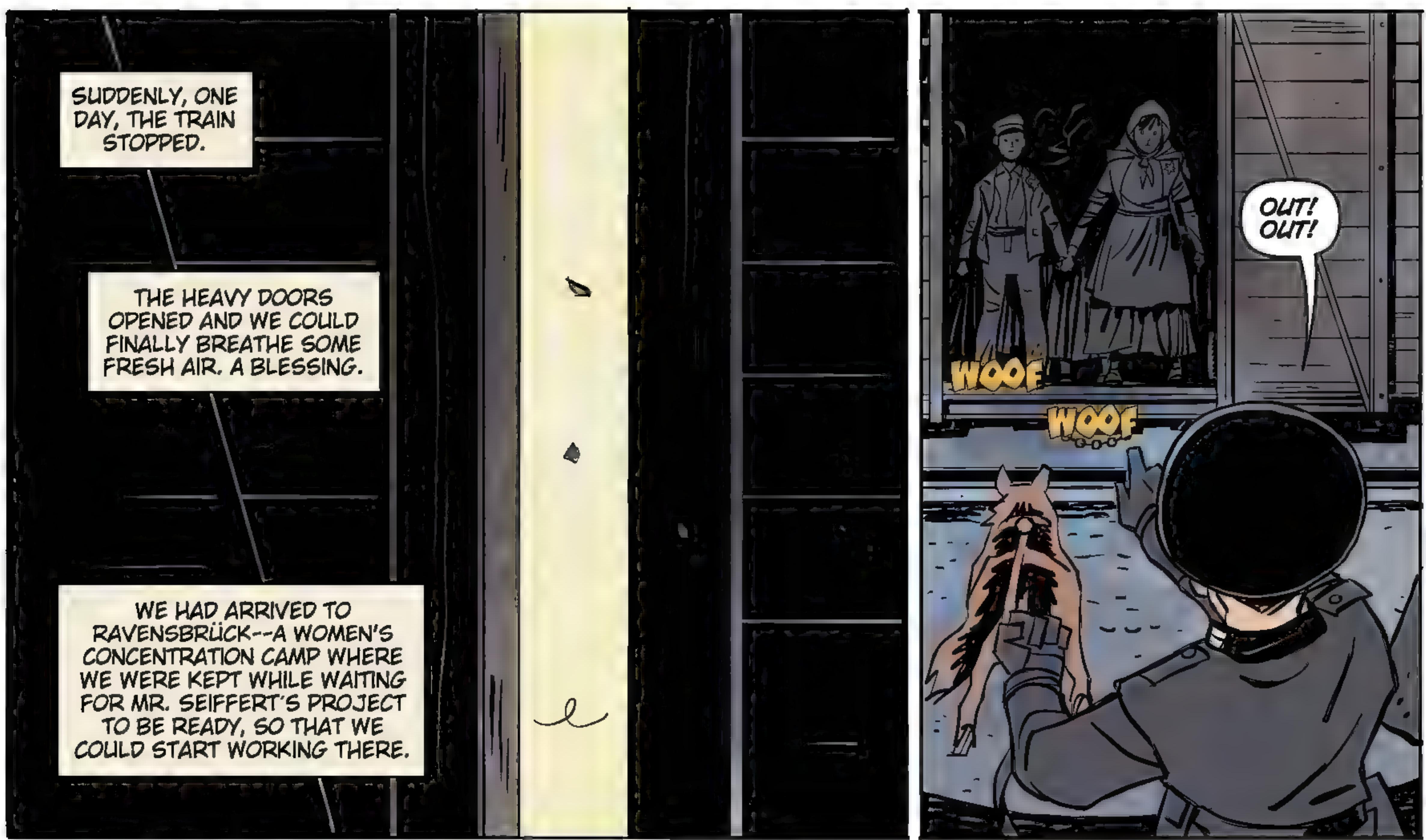
HE CREATED A PROJECT TO TAKE HIM OUT OF THE GHETTO. AND US, TOO, AS IT WOULD TURN OUT.

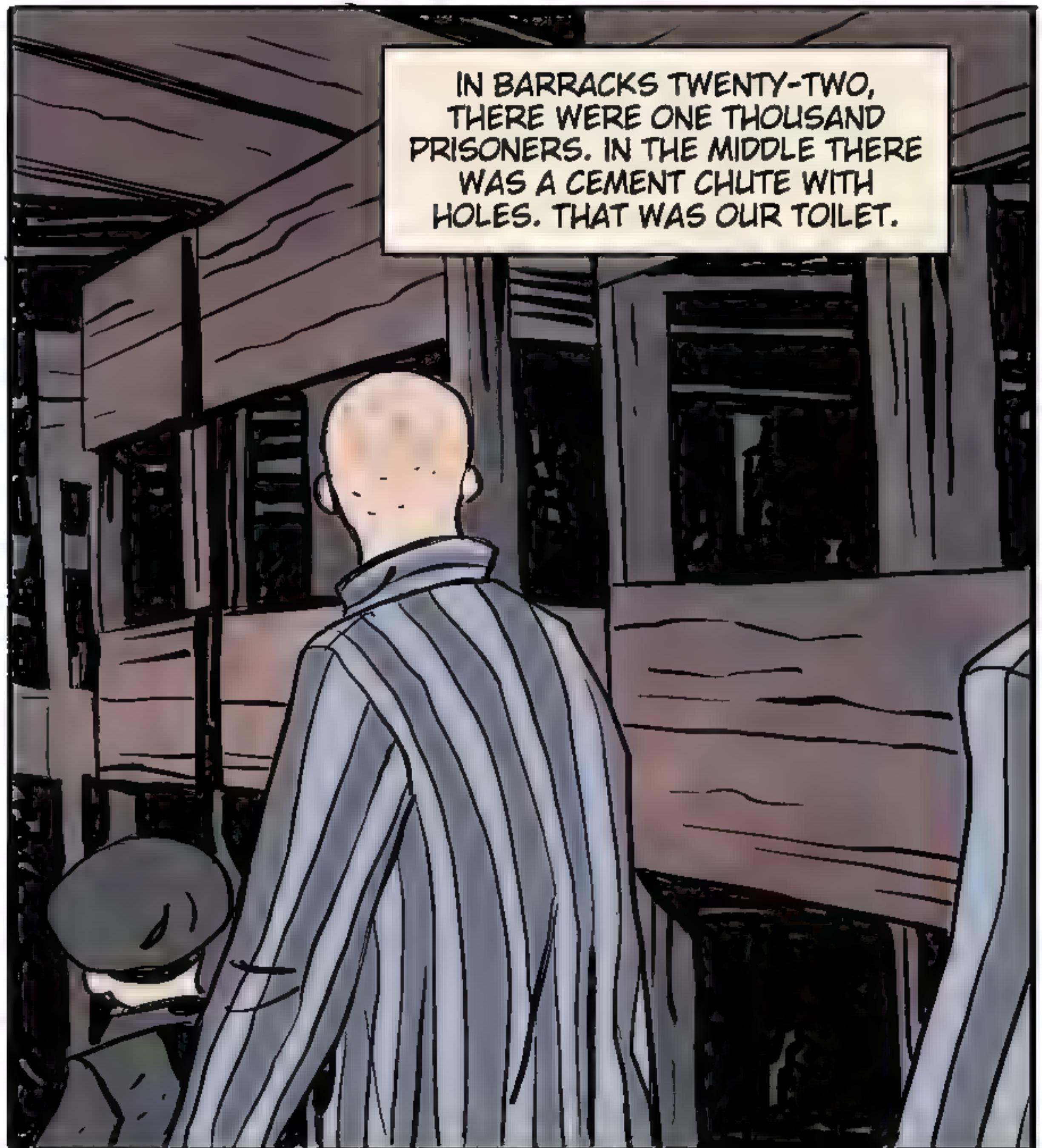
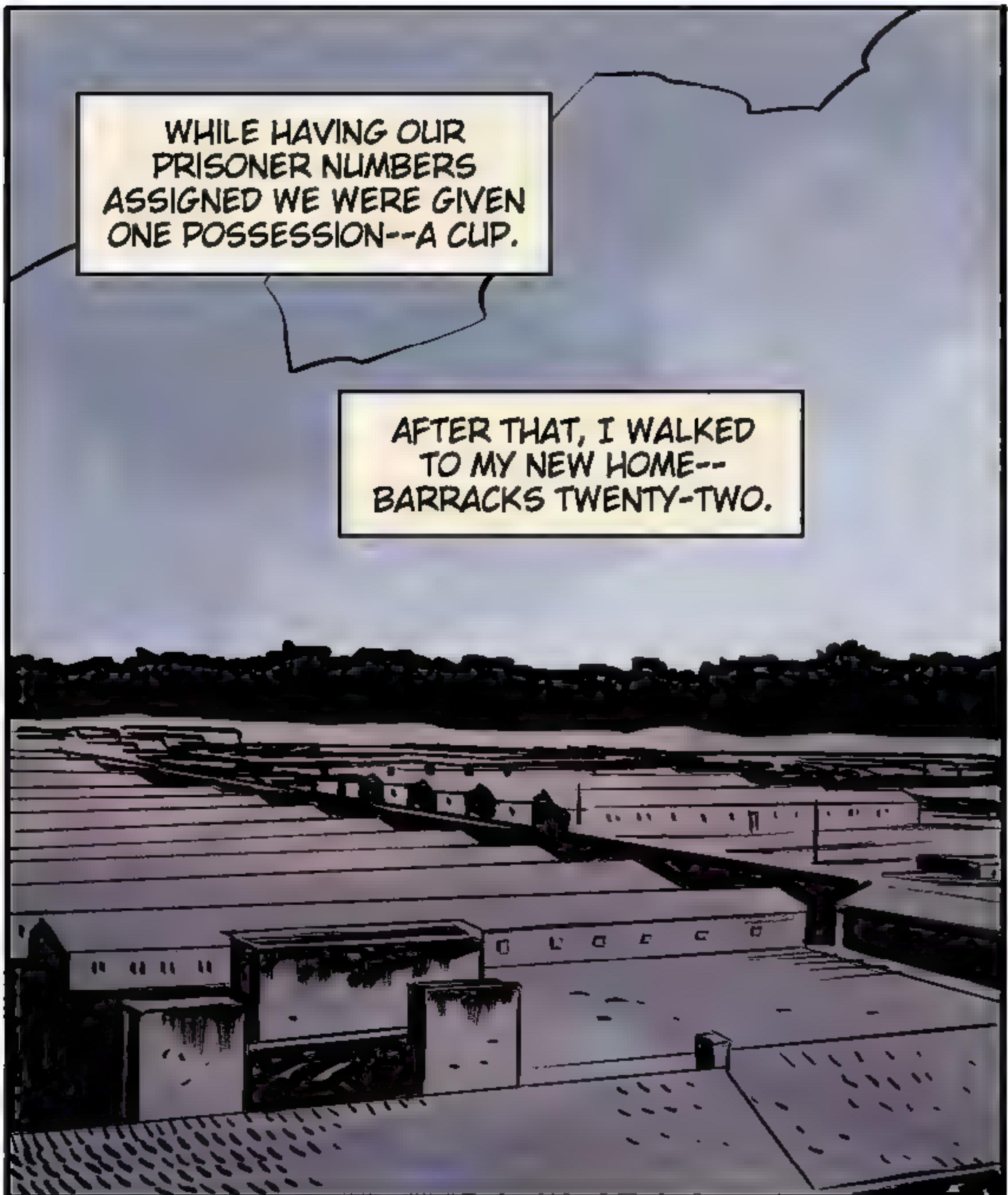
HE WOULD HELP TO REBUILD WAR-DAMAGED GERMANY. FOR THIS HE NEEDED THREE HUNDRED PRISONERS, WHICH HE HIMSELF PICKED OUT.

ONE OF THEM WAS MY DAD--FOR WHAT REASON, I DO NOT KNOW.

MY DAD AND HIS CLOSEST FAMILY WERE TO LEAVE THE GHETTO.







MUM AND I GOT A BED ON TOP. WE HAD TO CLIMB THE POST OF THE BED TO GET UP.

WE HAD TO SLEEP FEET TO FEET WITH ANOTHER BOY AND HIS MUM.

IN THE MORNING, COFFEE WAS HANDED OUT--LIKEWARM WATER WITH BARK.

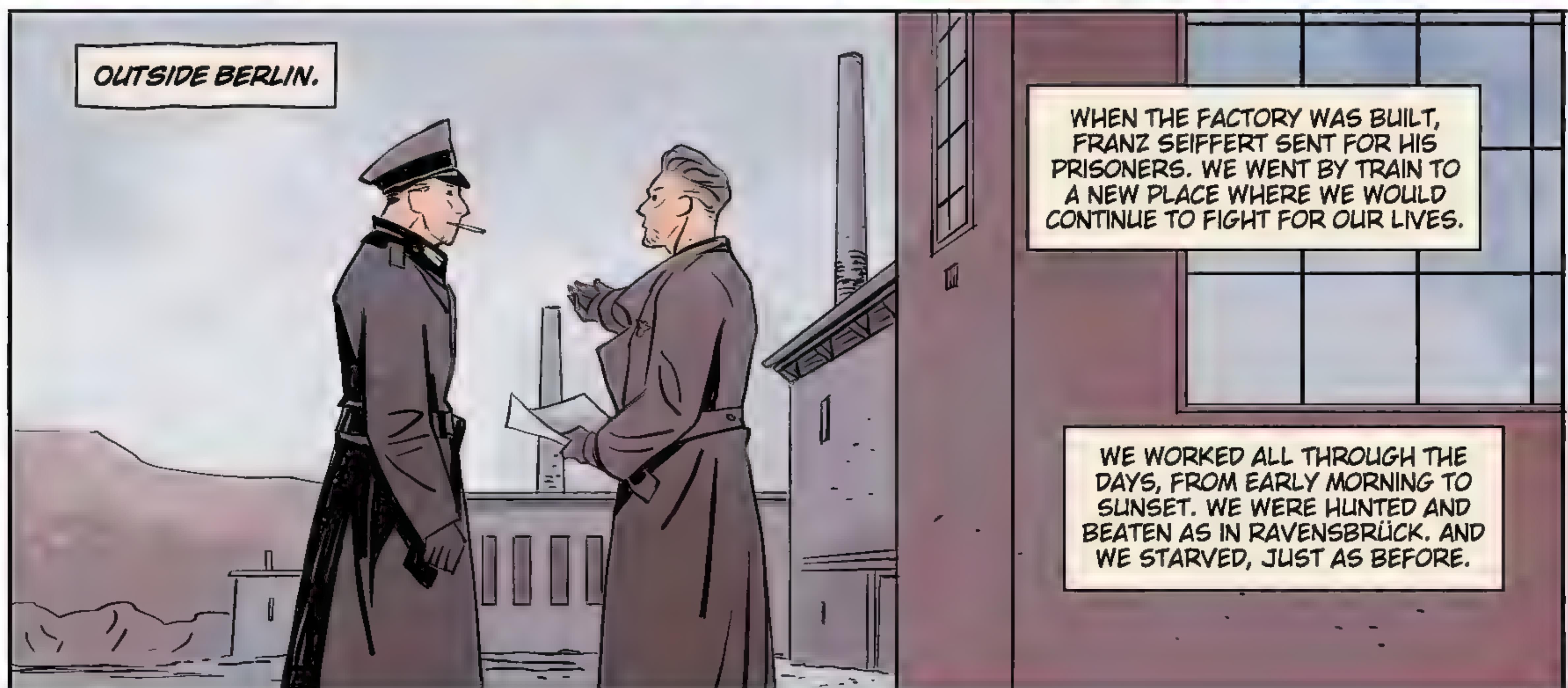
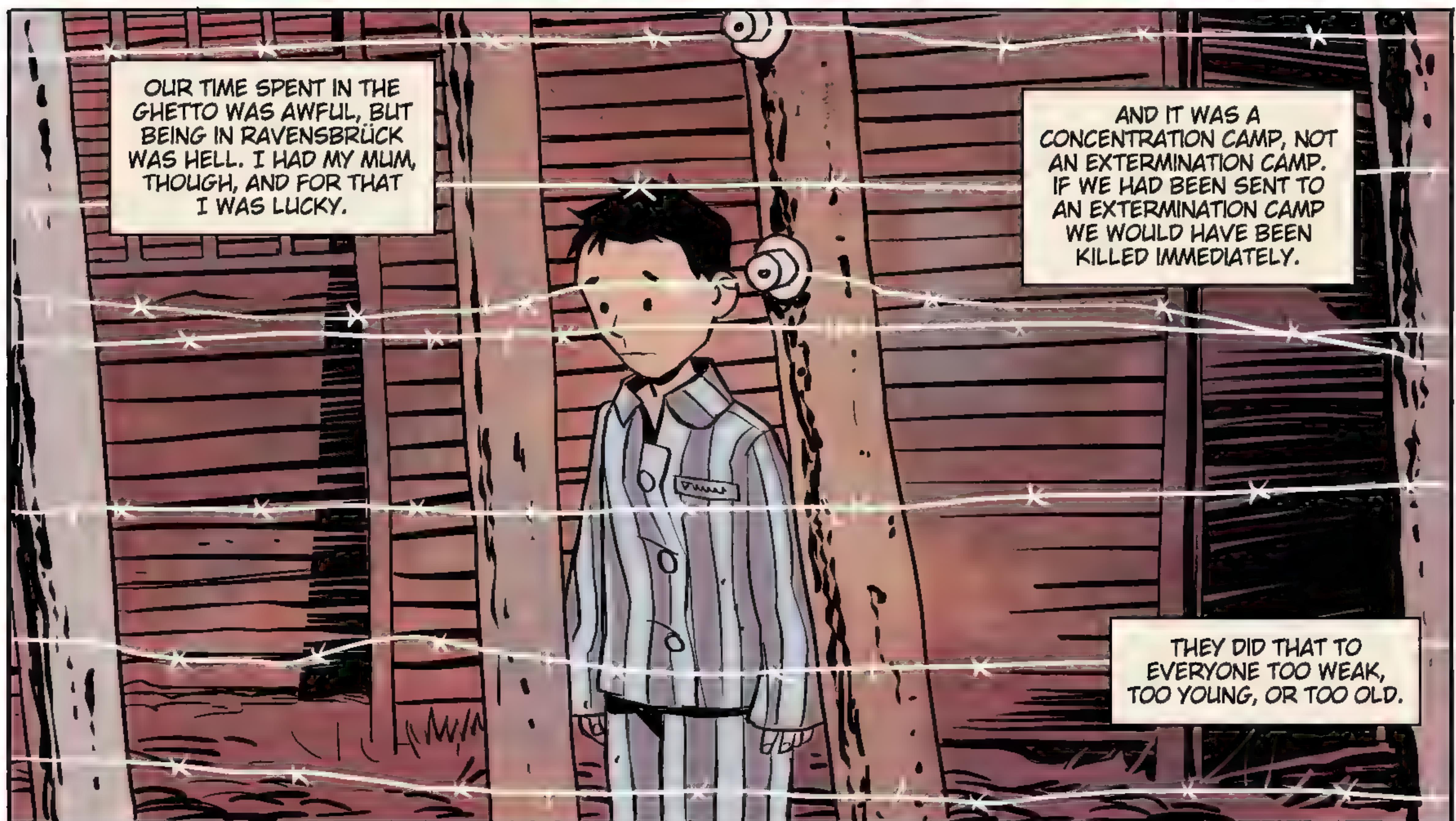
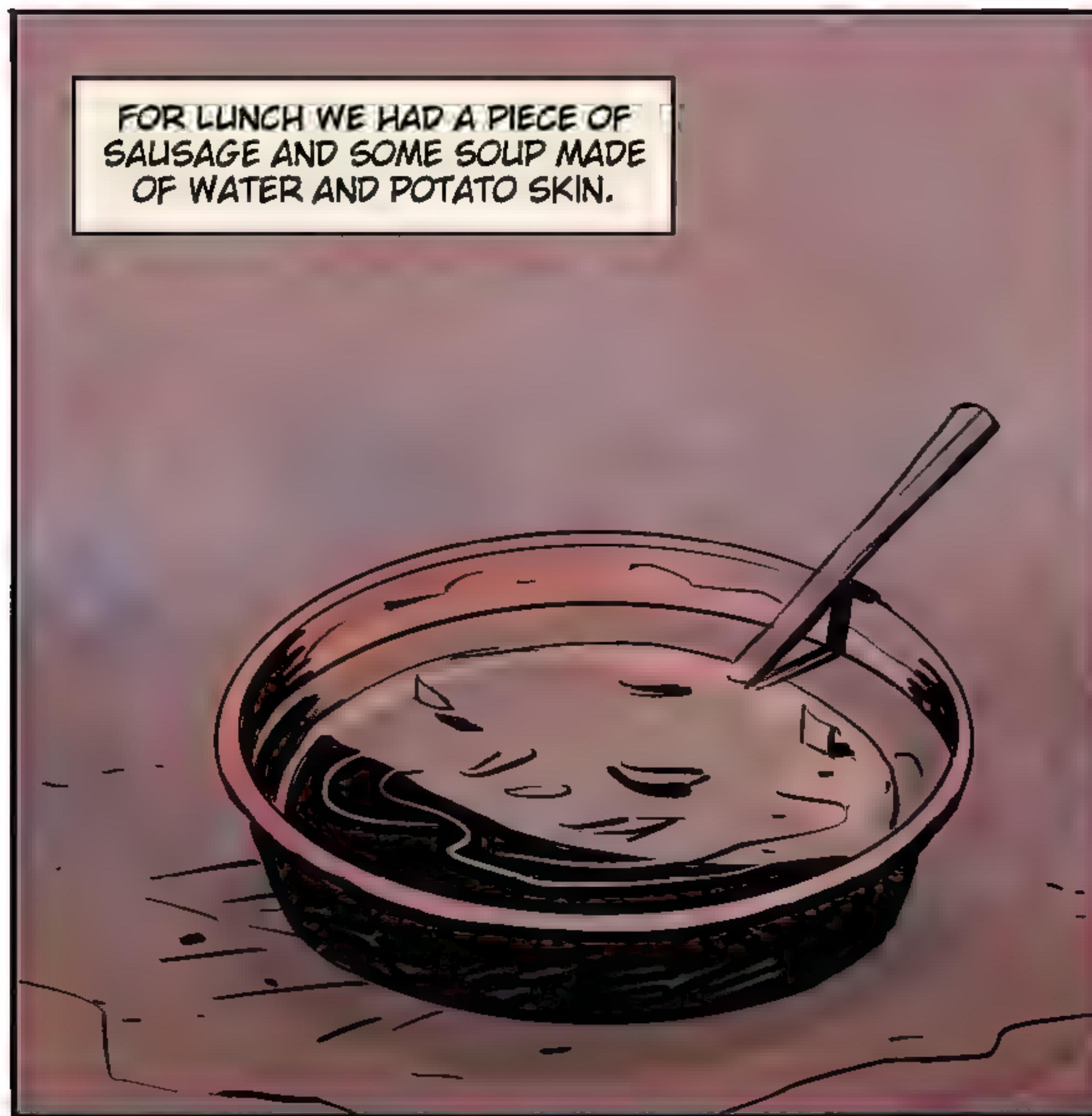
AFTER THAT, WE STOOD OUTSIDE WAITING TO BE COUNTED.

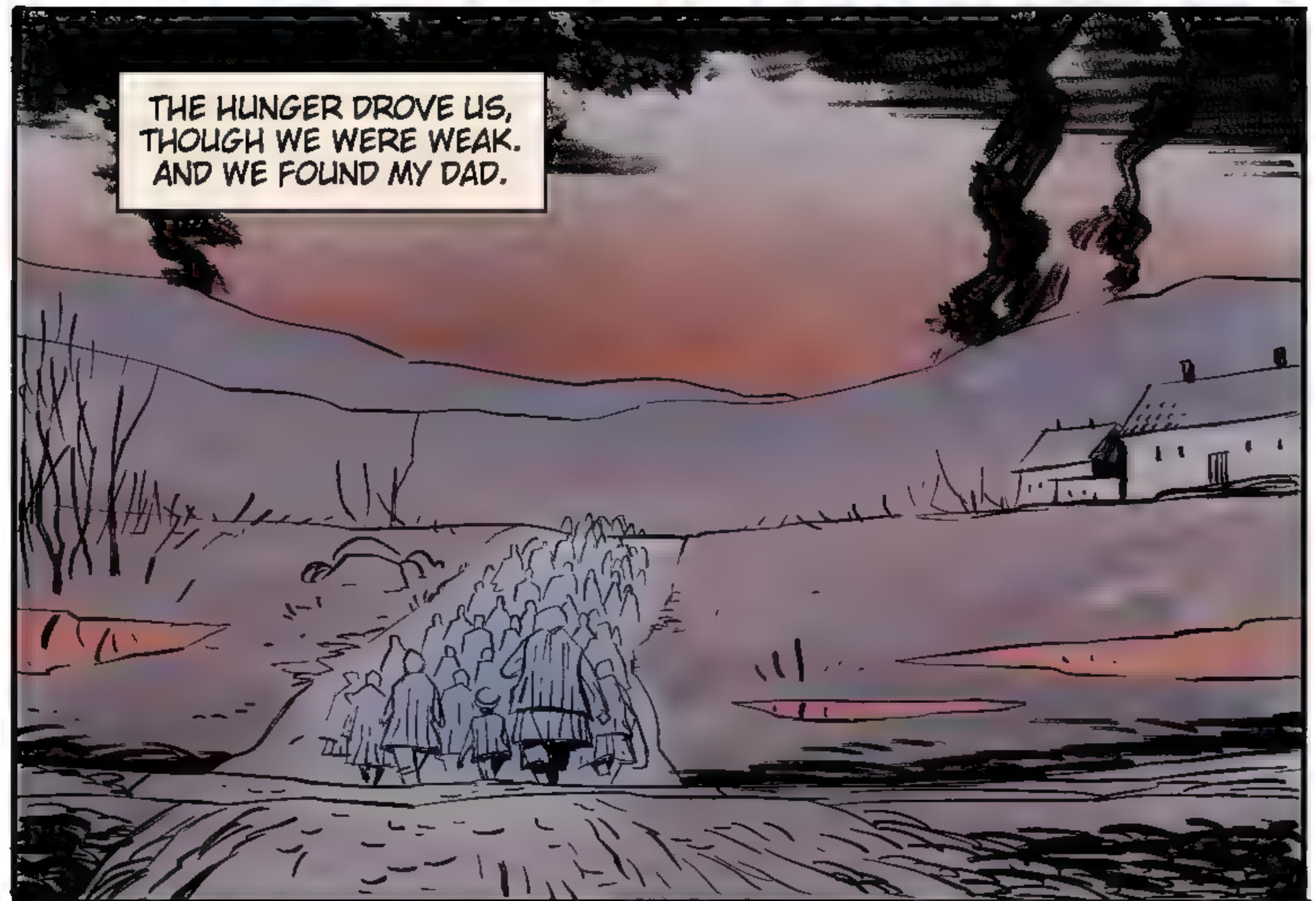
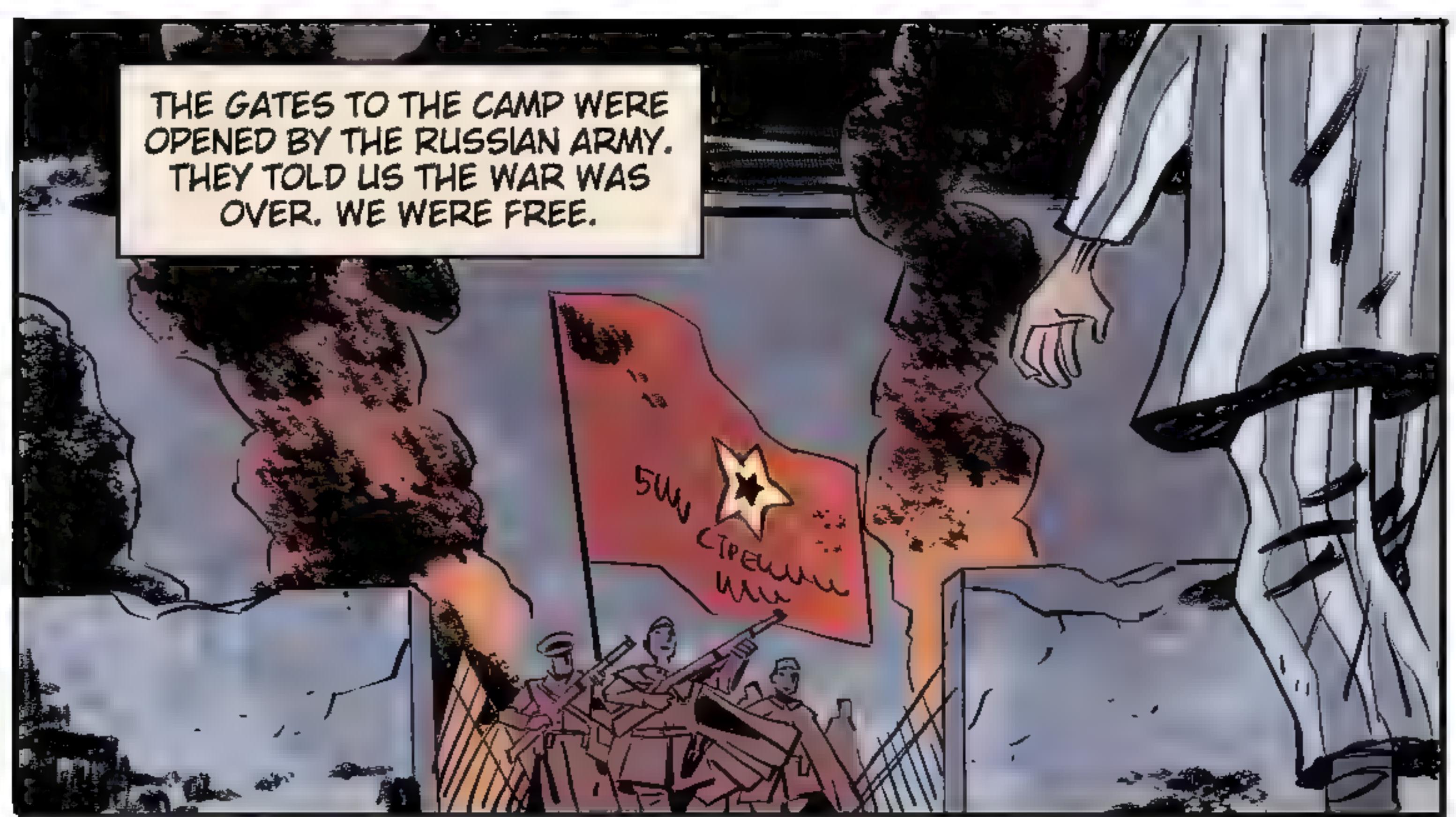
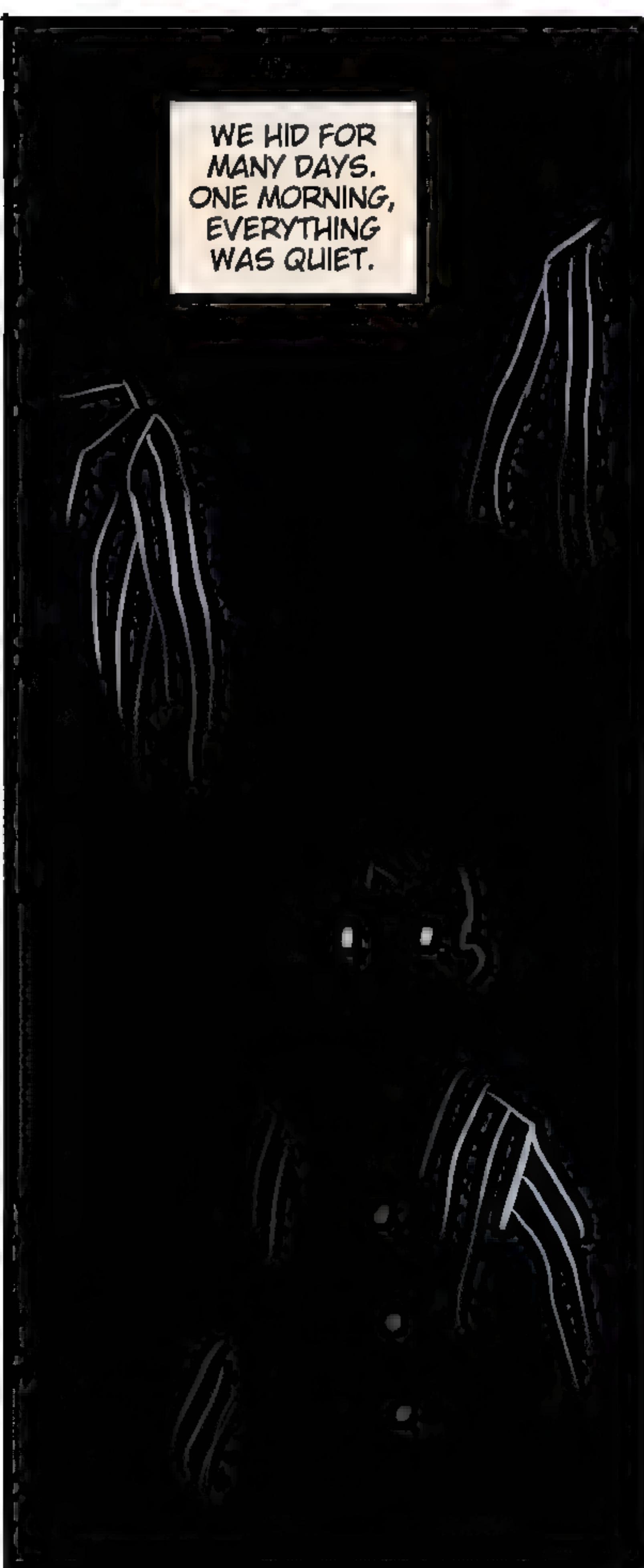
IT WAS NEVER THE SAME AS THE DAY BEFORE.

AT SIX O'CLOCK, WHEN THE COUNTING WAS DONE, THE DOORS TO OUR BARRACKS WERE LOCKED.

WE WENT TO WORK. ME AND MY MUM WORKED OUT IN THE WOODS.





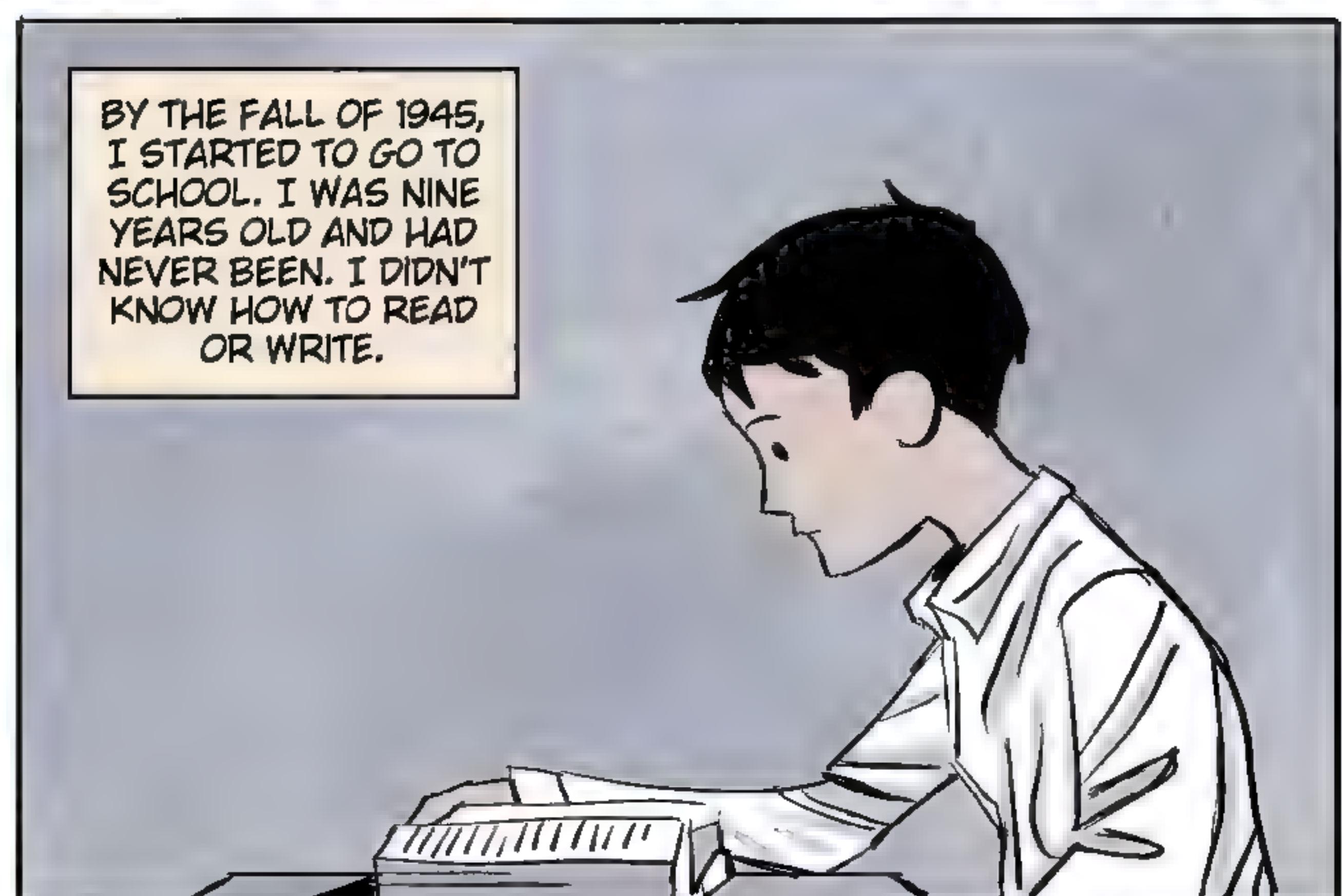
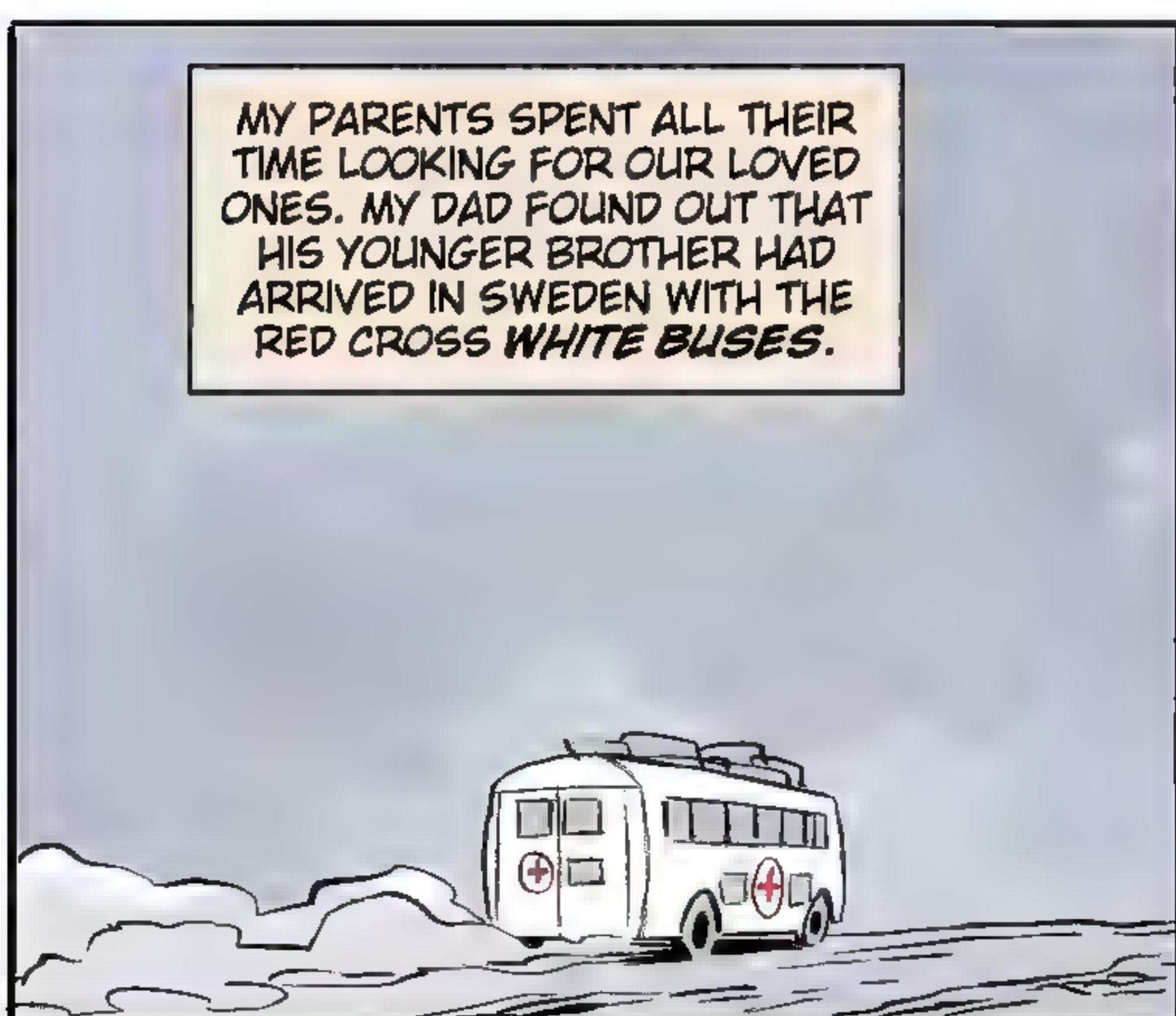


WE RETURNED TO LODZ, OUR OLD HOMETOWN, AND REOPENED OUR GROCERY STORE.



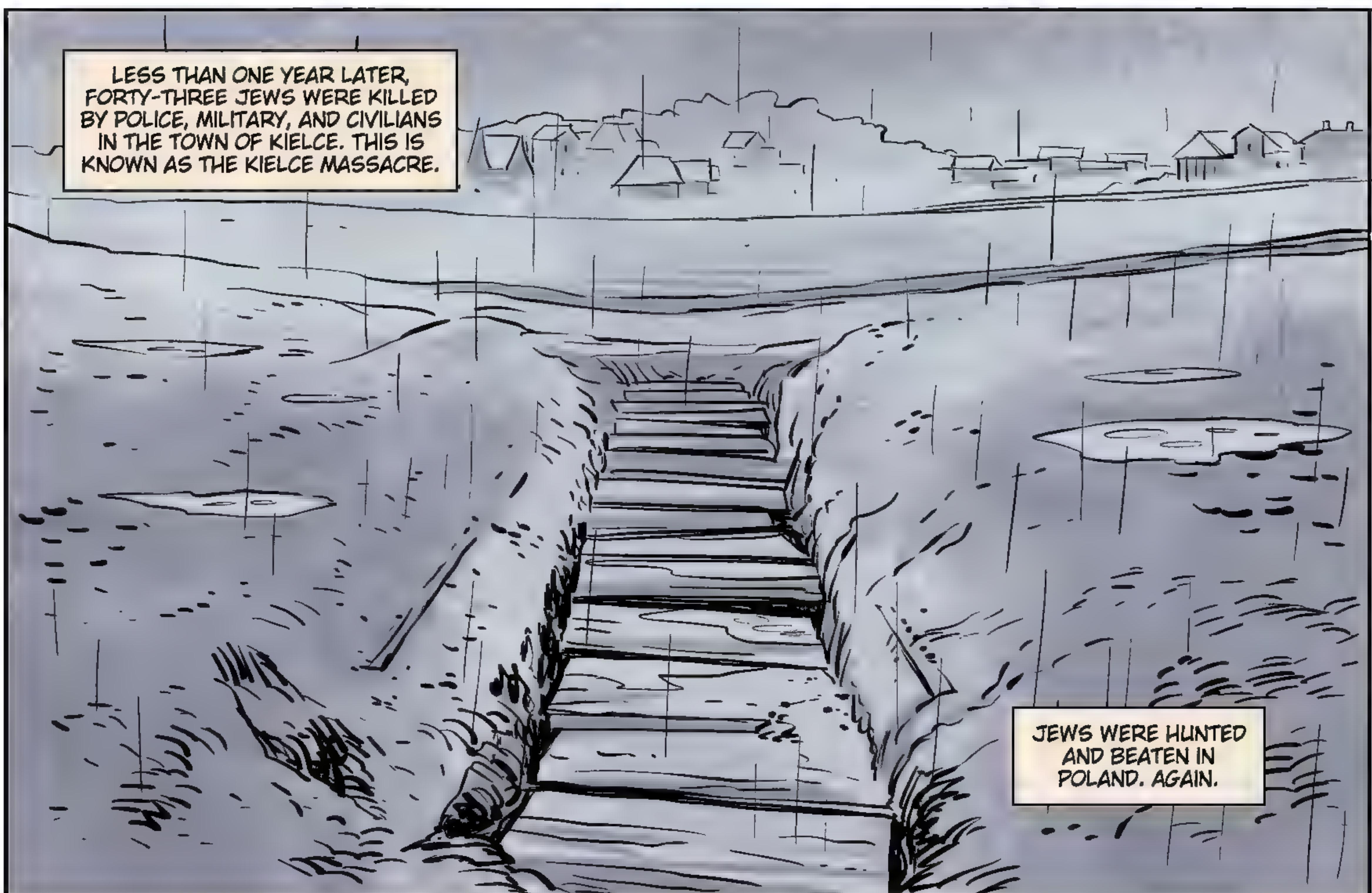
MY PARENTS SPENT ALL THEIR TIME LOOKING FOR OUR LOVED ONES. MY DAD FOUND OUT THAT HIS YOUNGER BROTHER HAD ARRIVED IN SWEDEN WITH THE RED CROSS WHITE BUSES.

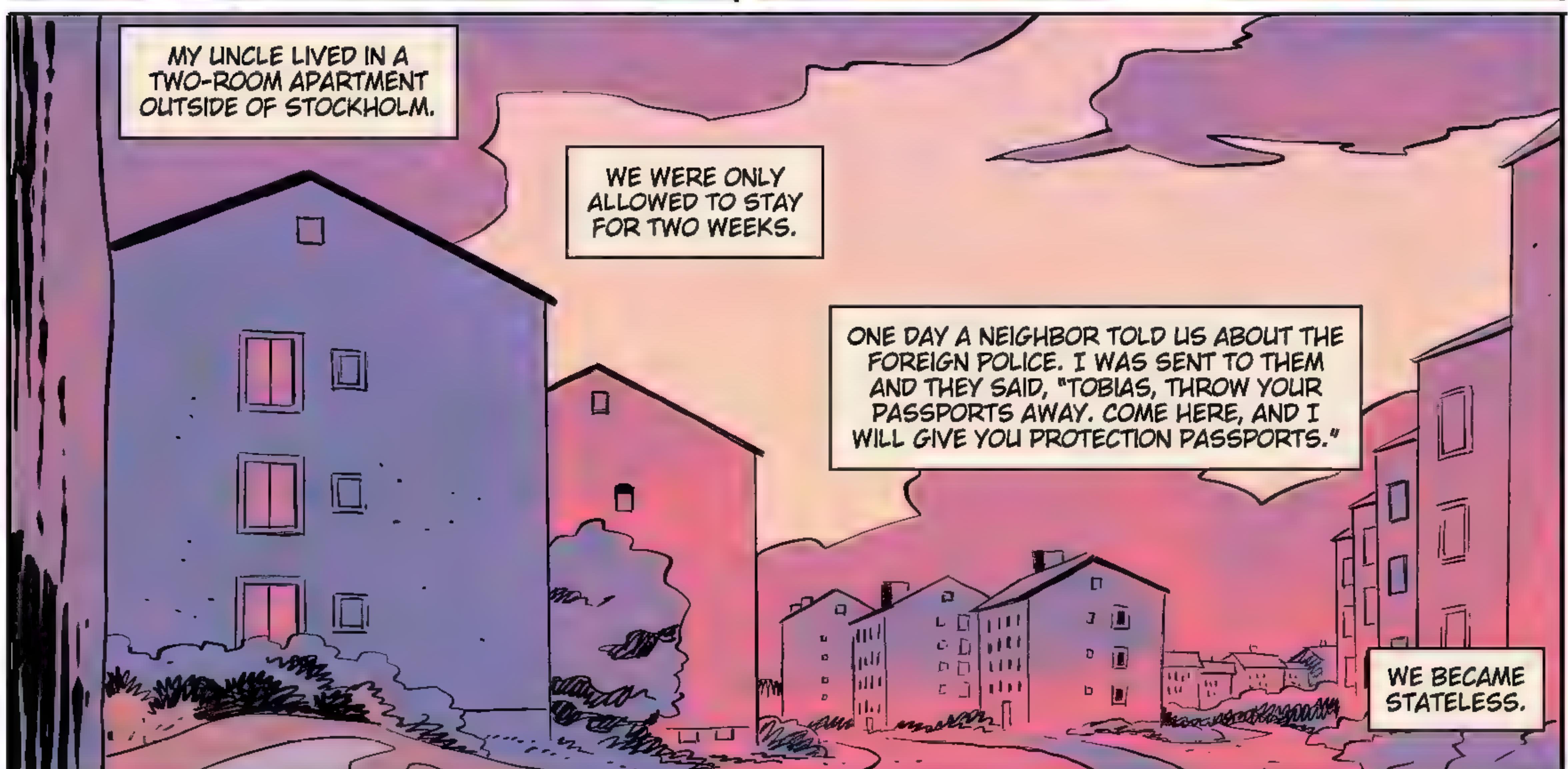
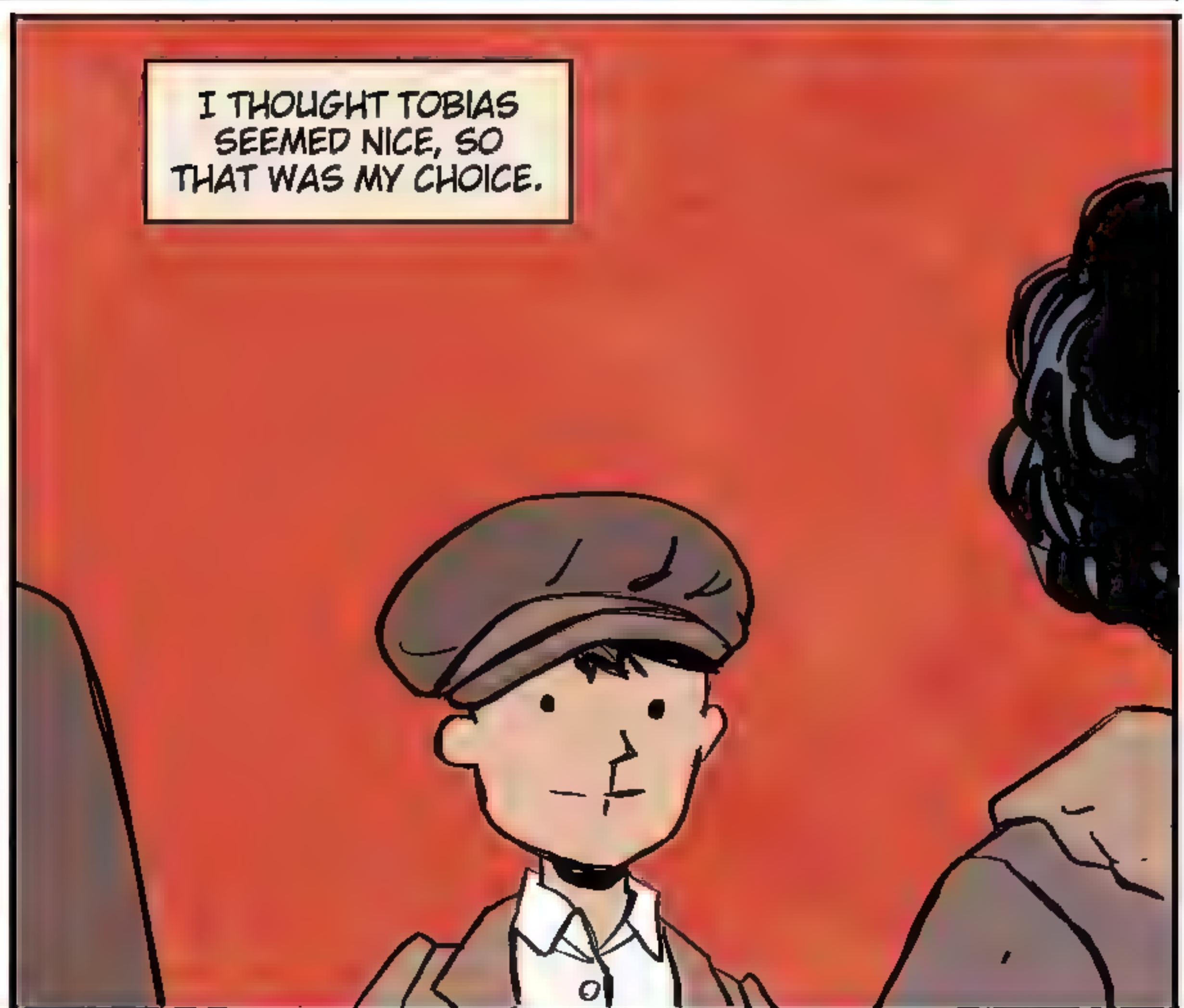
BY THE FALL OF 1945, I STARTED TO GO TO SCHOOL. I WAS NINE YEARS OLD AND HAD NEVER BEEN. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO READ OR WRITE.



LESS THAN ONE YEAR LATER, FORTY-THREE JEWS WERE KILLED BY POLICE, MILITARY, AND CIVILIANS IN THE TOWN OF KIELCE. THIS IS KNOWN AS THE KIELCE MASSACRE.

JEWS WERE HUNTED AND BEATEN IN POLAND, AGAIN.





BUT WE WERE
WELCOME.

AFTER A WHILE I
COULD START SCHOOL
AGAIN, IN SWEDEN.

I HAD ARRIVED
IN PARADISE.

WHEN I WAS TWENTY-FIVE
YEARS OLD, I MET MONIKA.
WE GOT MARRIED AND MADE
A HAPPY HOME FOR US AND
OUR THREE CHILDREN.





In 1992, **Tobias Rawet** heard the French historical revisionist Robert Faurisson claim that the Holocaust never happened. He was shocked. His terrible childhood experiences never took place? He decided to devote his life to telling the true story about what can happen when anti-democratic forces are allowed to reign, and to tell the truth about what can happen if everyone's human rights are not defended. Since then, he has called on every young person to open their eyes and to work for equality and tolerance.

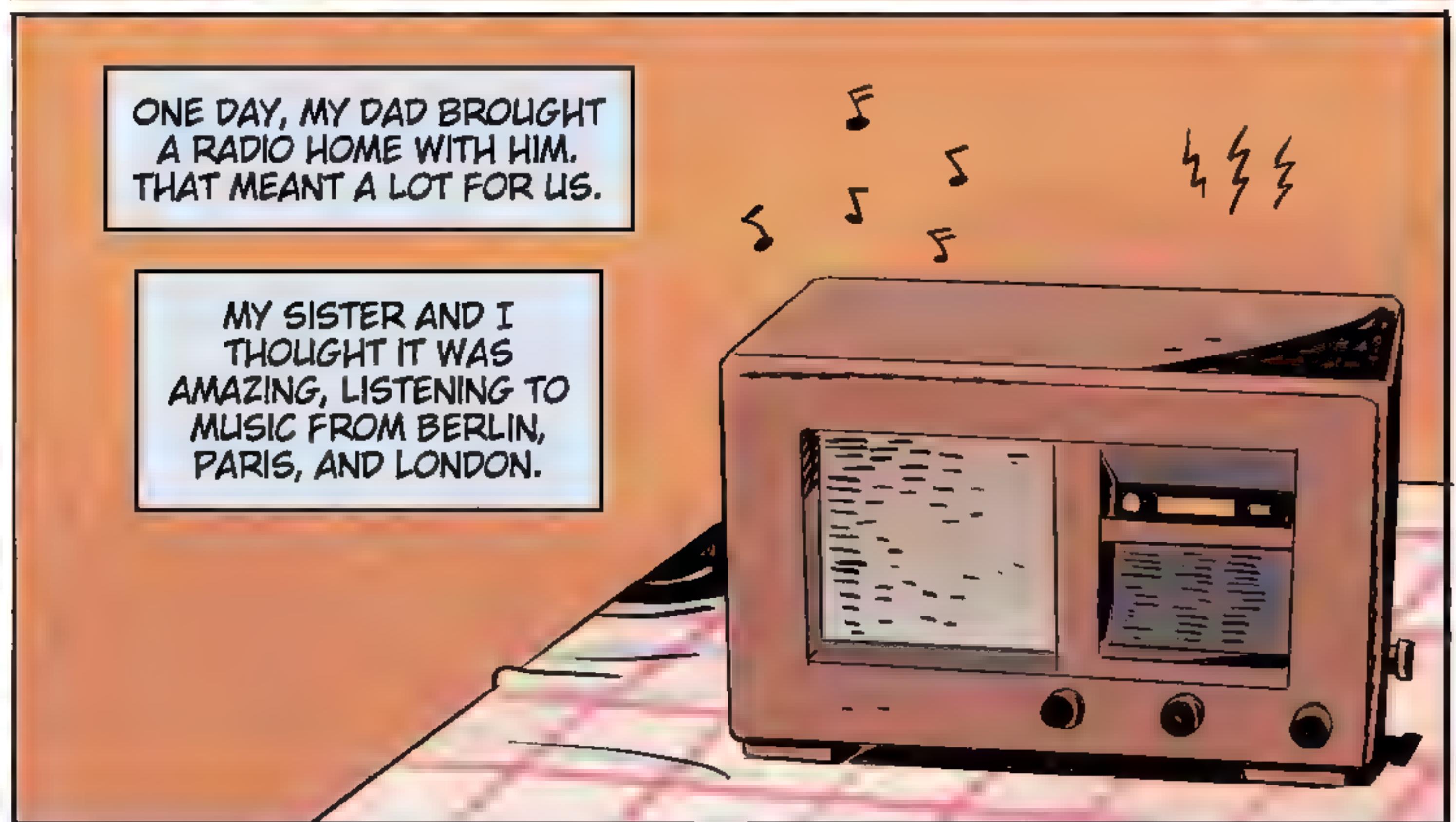
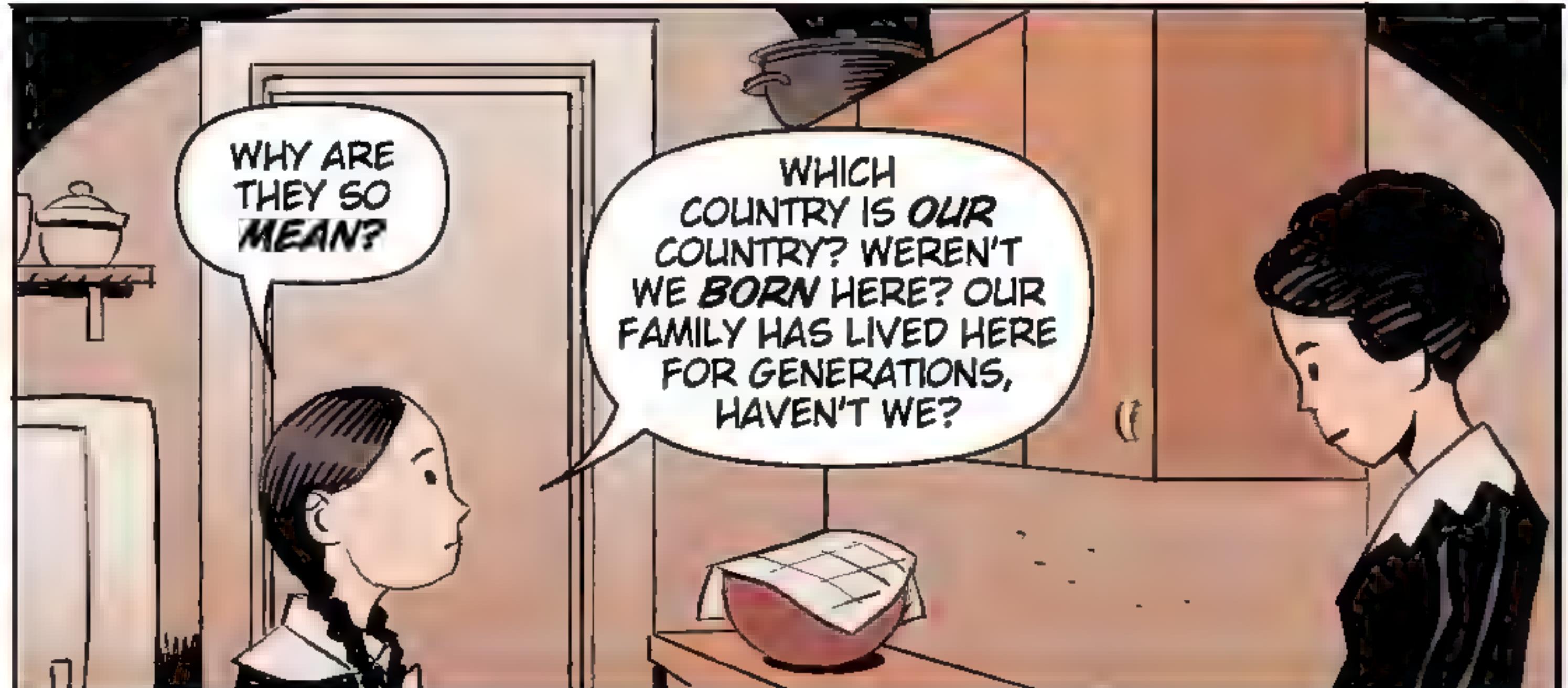
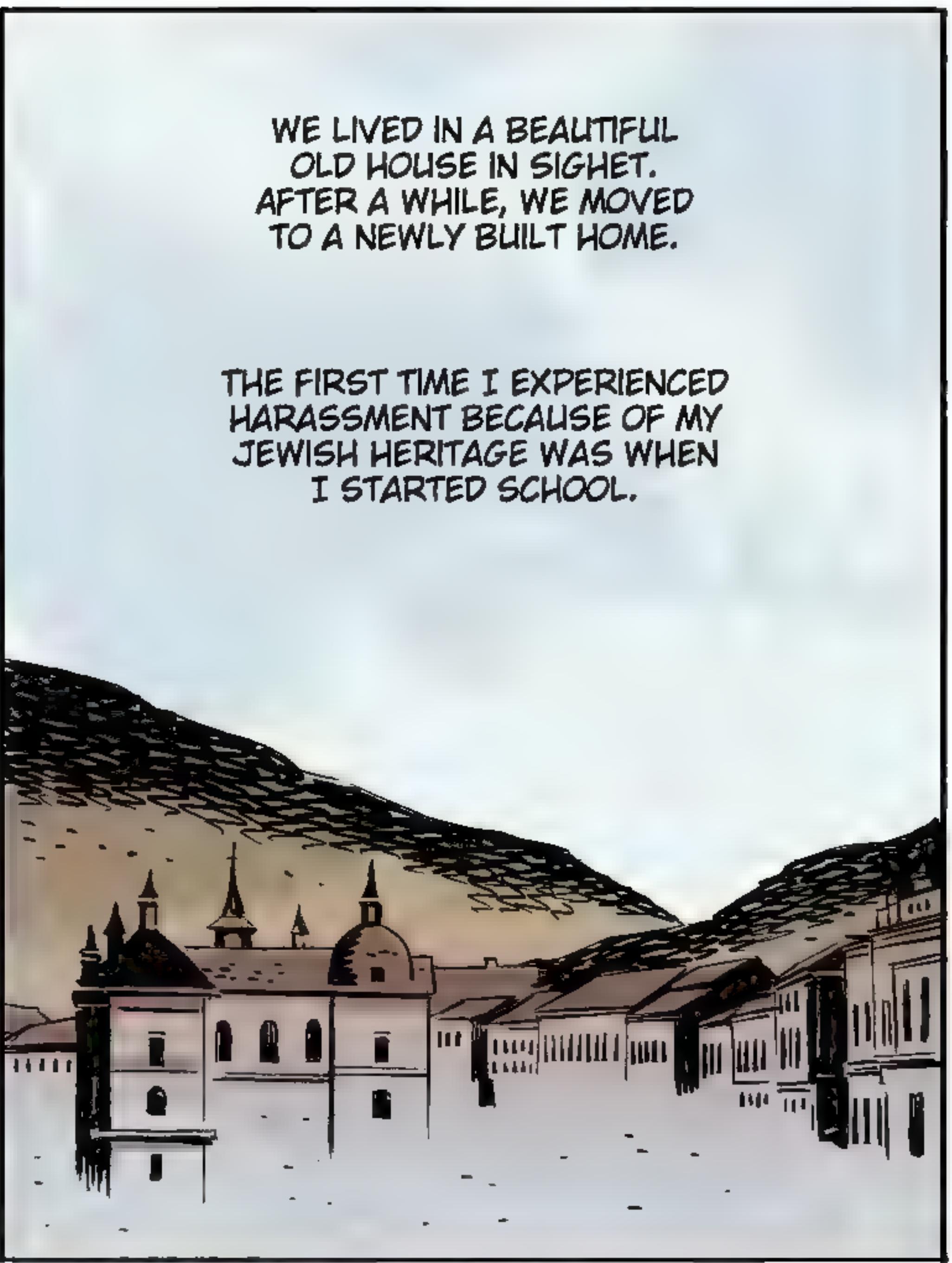
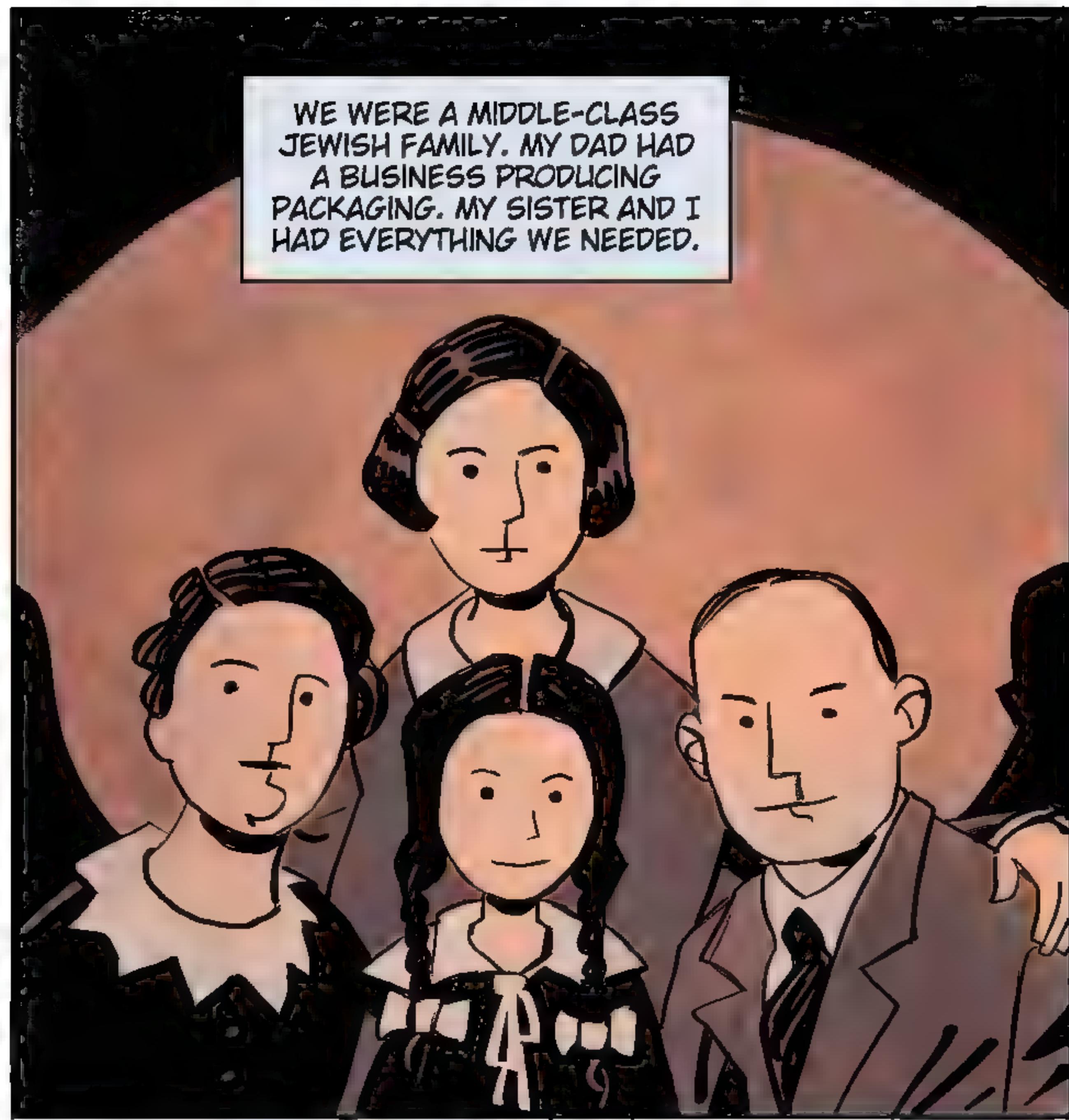
MY NAME IS
LIVIA FRÄNKEL.

Livia

I WAS BORN IN SIGHET. THE TOWN HAS HAD GREAT INFLUENCE ON EUROPEAN AND JEWISH HISTORY.

THE CITY OF SIGHET SITS IN THE NORTH OF TRANSYLVANIA WHERE THE RIVERS TISZA AND IZA MEET IN A BILLOWY LANDSCAPE, SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS.

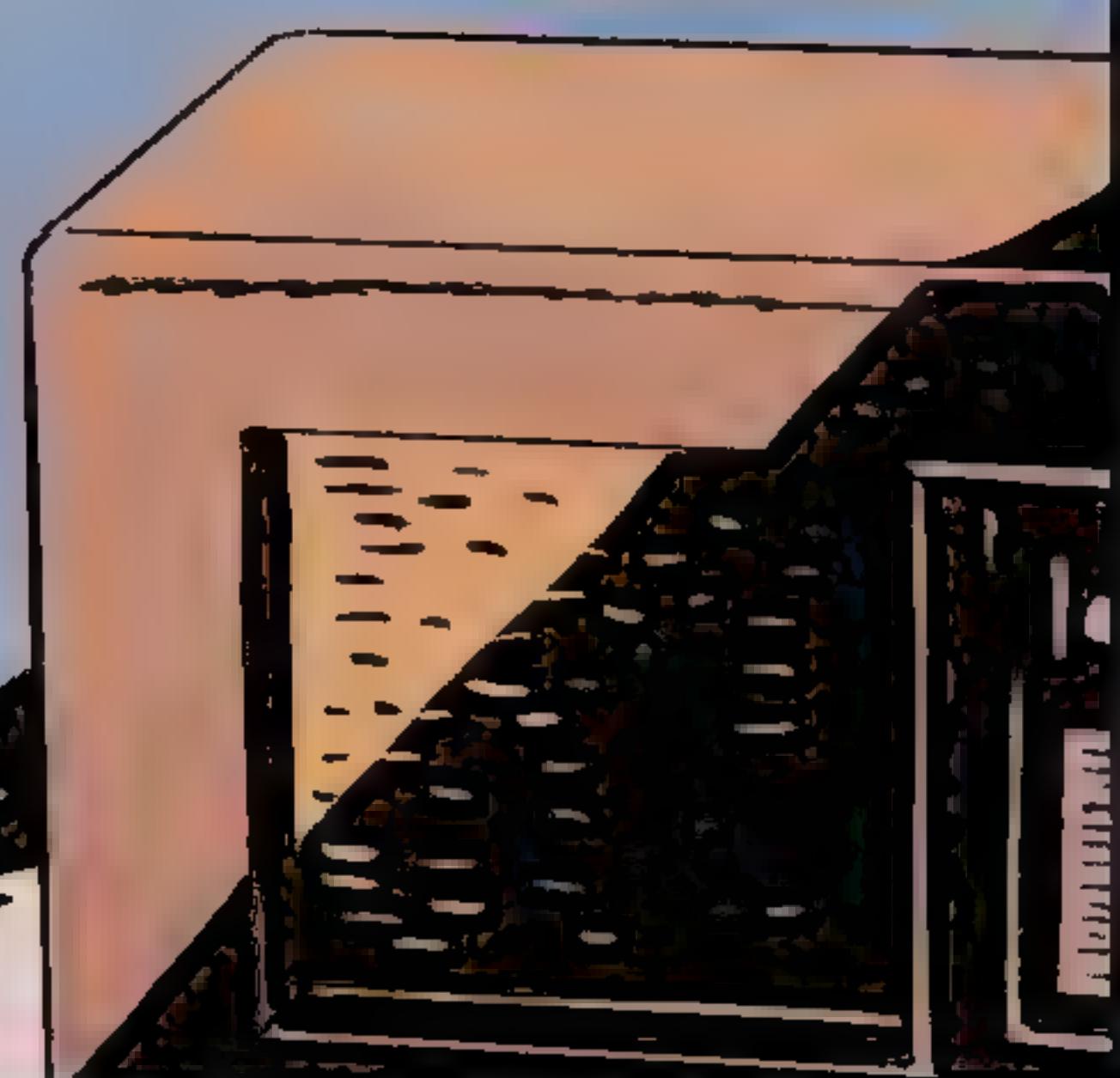




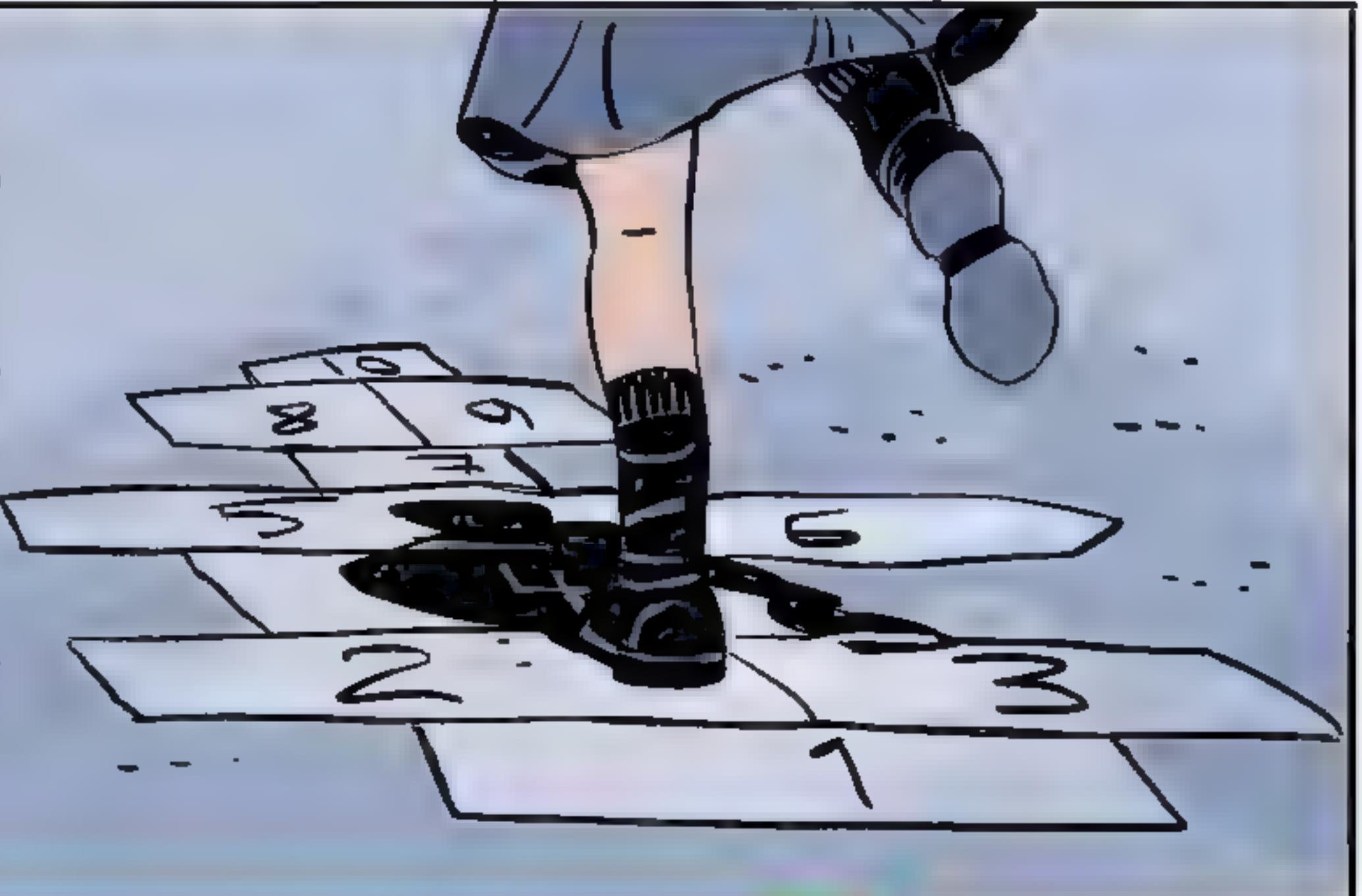
THE RADIO WAS IMPORTANT TO OUR PARENTS. THEY WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN EUROPE. DAD BOUGHT THE RADIO IN 1933, THE YEAR THAT HITLER GAINED POWER IN GERMANY.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 WAS A FRIDAY. I WENT INSIDE TO MAKE A SANDWICH. MY MUM SAT AT THE TABLE, LISTENING TO THE NEWS, TEARS FALLING DOWN HER CHEEKS.

WAR HAS BROKEN OUT.



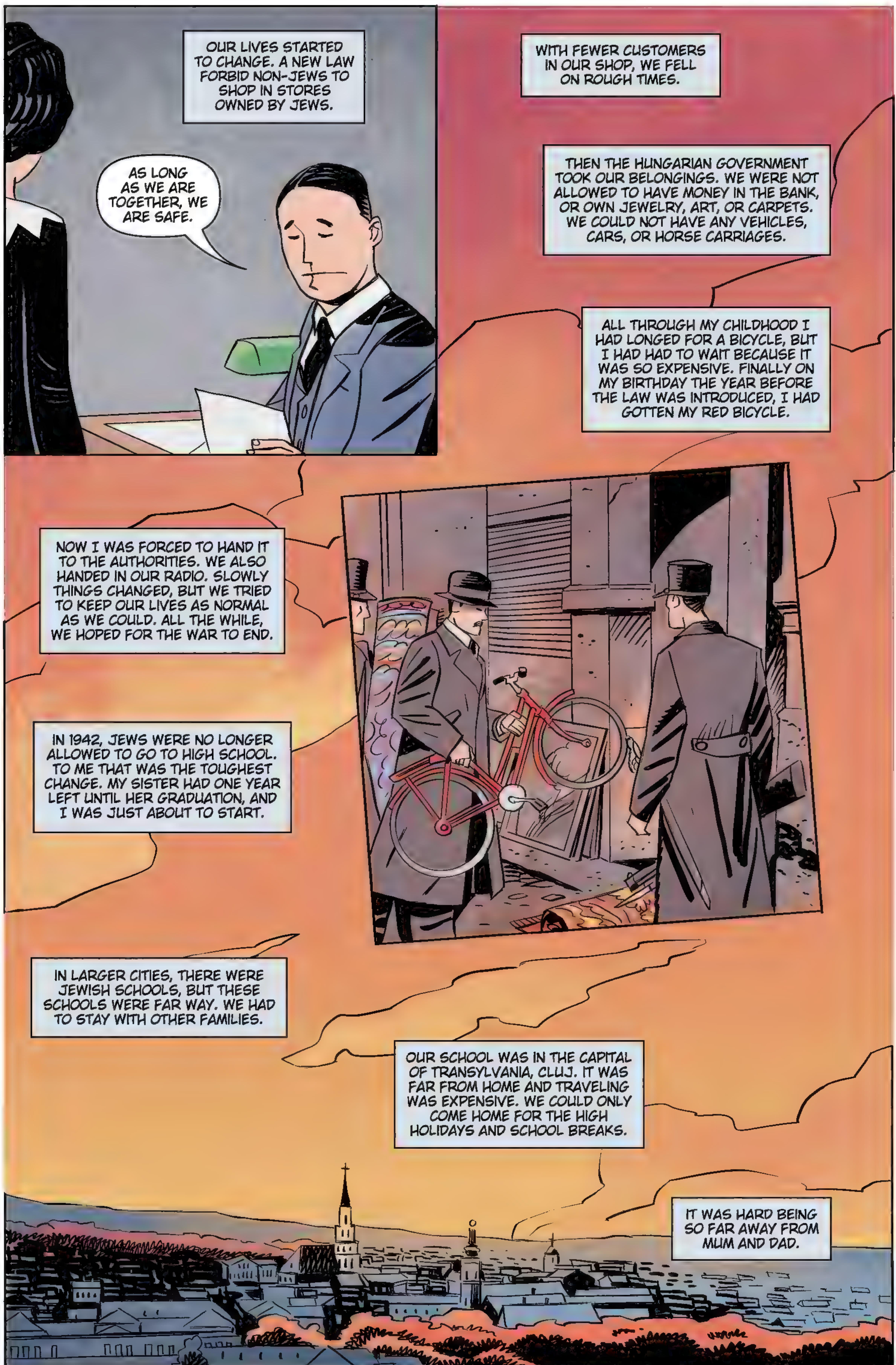
MUM WAS A TEENAGER WHEN THE FIRST WORLD WAR BROKE OUT. MY DAD FOUGHT AS A YOUNG SOLDIER AT THE FRONTLINES. MUM WAS DEVASTATED. I THOUGHT WAR SOUNDED SCARY.




BUT IT WAS FAR AWAY. NO NEED TO CRY NOW, BEFORE WE KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN, I THOUGHT. I DRIED MY TEARS AND WENT OUT TO PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS.

SOON, I STOPPED THINKING ABOUT THE WAR. IT WAS VERY QUIET AND PEACEFUL IN OUR TOWN. THOUGH WE HEARD OF BATTLES, AND NAZIS HUNTING JEWS, WE DIDN'T FEEL THREATENED.







SIGHET IS SITUATED BY THE BORDER WITH UKRAINE. IN 1943 WHEN I GOT HOME FOR WINTER BREAK, THERE WERE A LOT OF RUMORS SAYING THE RUSSIANS WERE CLOSE. IF THE RUSSIANS CAME THE WAR WOULD BE OVER.

MY DAD THOUGHT THINGS COULD GET CHAOTIC SO HE ASKED ME TO STAY HOME AND NOT GO BACK TO SCHOOL UNTIL THINGS CALMED DOWN.

I HAD MY BOOKS AND COULD KEEP UP WITH MY STUDIES FROM HOME. IF THE RUSSIANS ARRIVED AND THE WAR ENDED, MY LIFE COULD CONTINUE AS BEFORE.

HE SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WAS FOR US TO BE TOGETHER. THAT SOUNDED OKAY TO ME.

MANY OF MY FRIENDS STUDIED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. WE HADN'T SEEN EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME AND WERE ALL BACK IN SIGHET FOR WINTER BREAK. WE DECIDED TO CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE AT A GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE WHOSE PARENTS WERE AWAY. WE COOKED A NICE MEAL AND LISTENED TO THE LATEST JAZZ.

WE SAT AROUND THE TABLE AND TOLD EACH OTHER OUR DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE, TAKING TURNS TALKING ABOUT OUR PLANS FOR WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER.

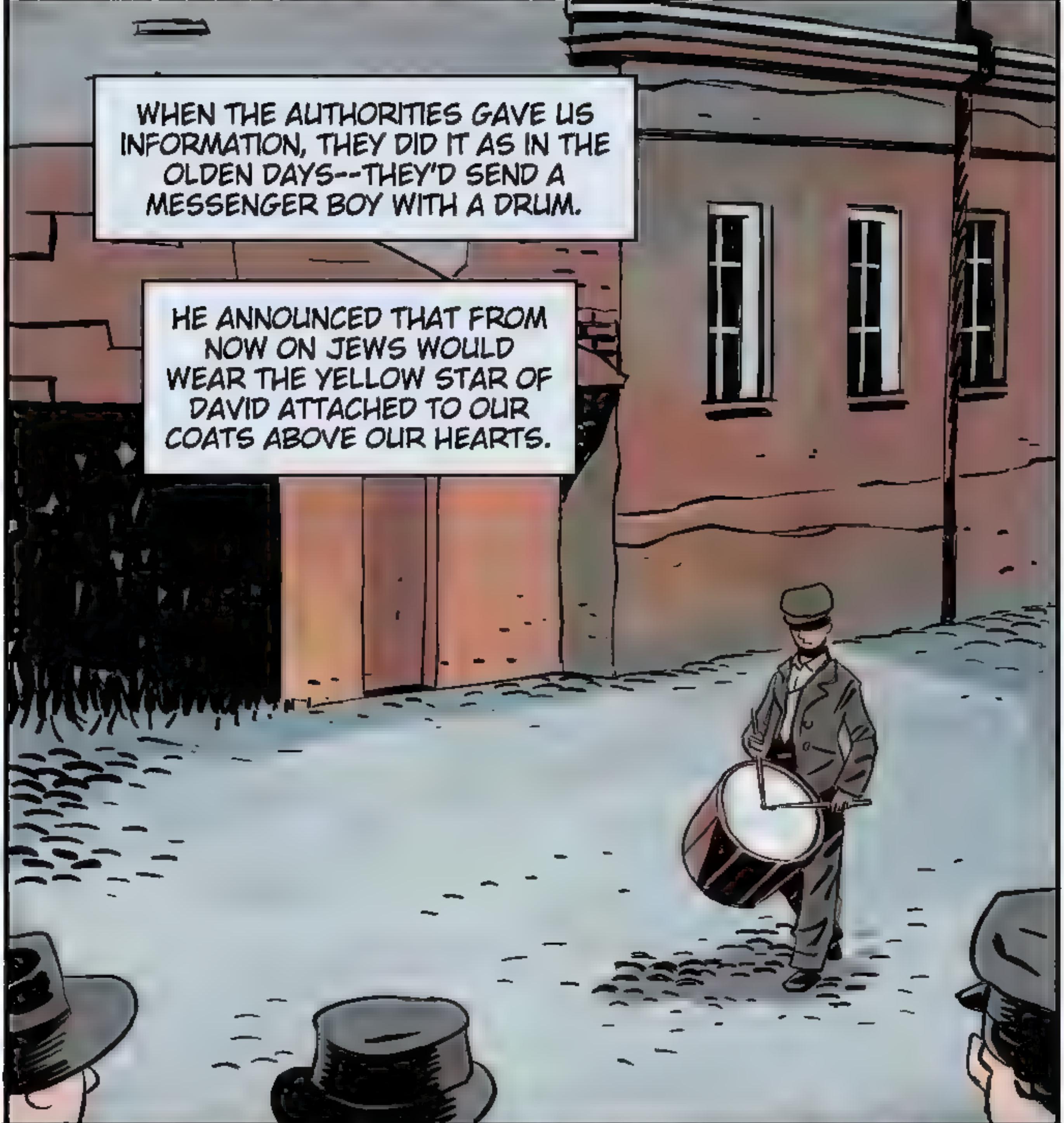
WE WERE CONVINCED WE'D MEET AGAIN IN THE COMING YEAR, 1945, WHEN WE'D FINALLY BE FREE. WE'D MEET AGAIN AND TELL EACH OTHER ABOUT WHAT WE HAD DONE DURING THE YEAR THAT HAD PASSED.

BUT THAT NEVER HAPPENED.

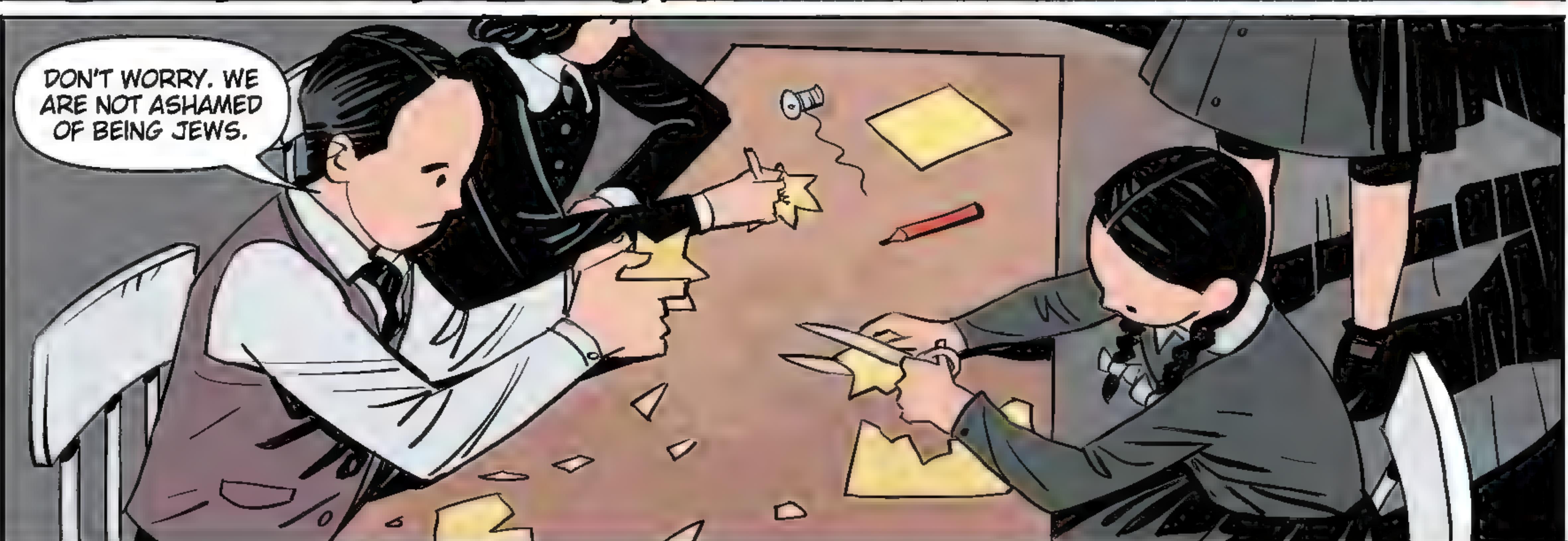
THE NEW YEAR CAME. I WAS HOME IN SIGHET WAITING FOR THE RUSSIANS. INSTEAD, ONE DAY, GERMAN SOLDIERS CAME DOWN THE STREETS. FOR THE FIRST TIME I FEARED FOR OUR LIVES.



WHEN THE AUTHORITIES GAVE US INFORMATION, THEY DID IT AS IN THE OLDEN DAYS--THEY'D SEND A MESSENGER BOY WITH A DRUM.



DON'T WORRY. WE ARE NOT ASHAMED OF BEING JEWS.



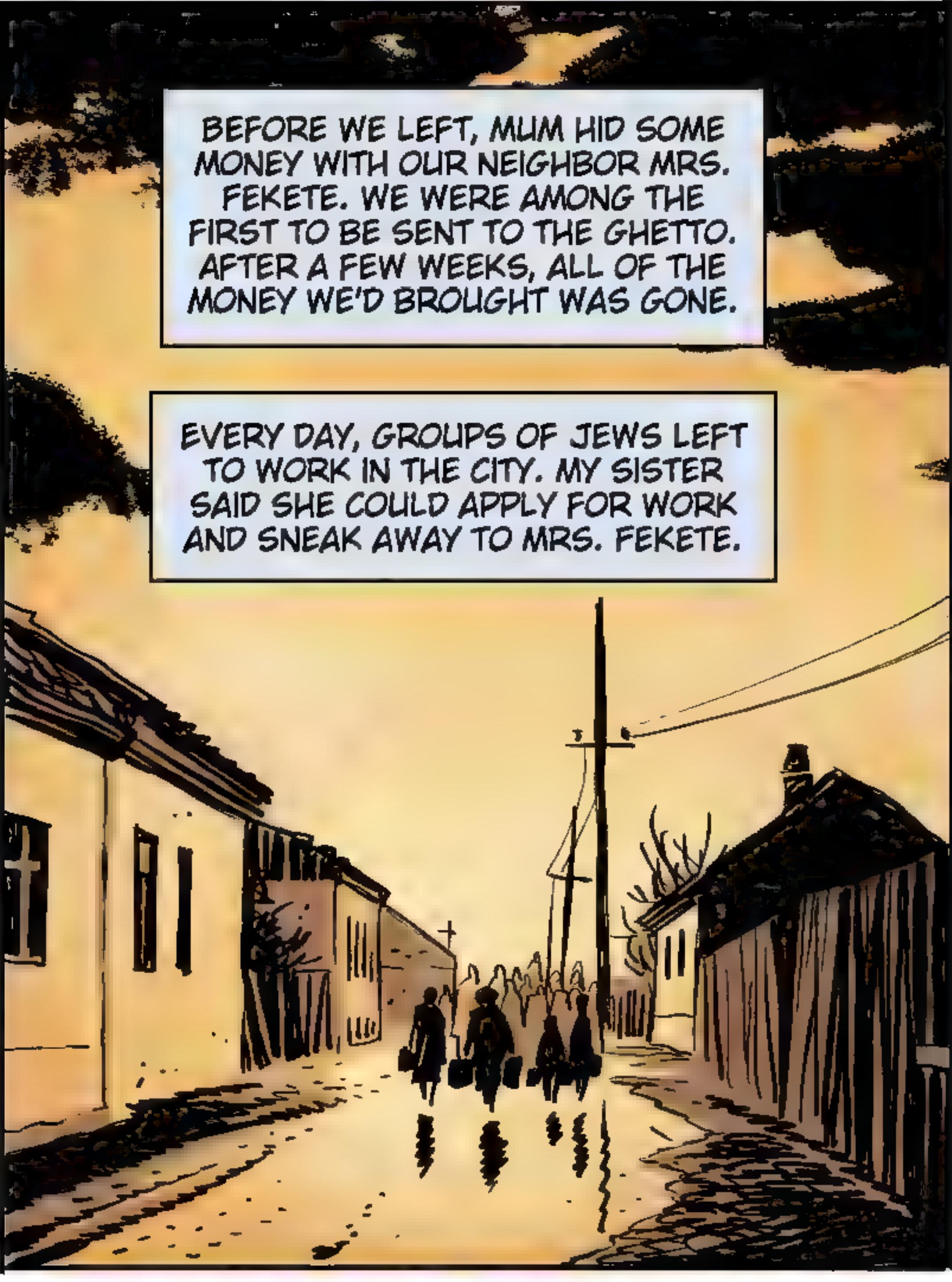
TWO WEEKS LATER WE HEARD THE DRUMMER BOY AGAIN. WE WERE TO MOVE TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY.

ALL NON-JEWS LIVING THERE WOULD MOVE OUT. AT THE SAME TIME, STREET BY STREET, THE TEN THOUSAND JEWS IN OUR TOWN WOULD LEAVE OUR HOMES.



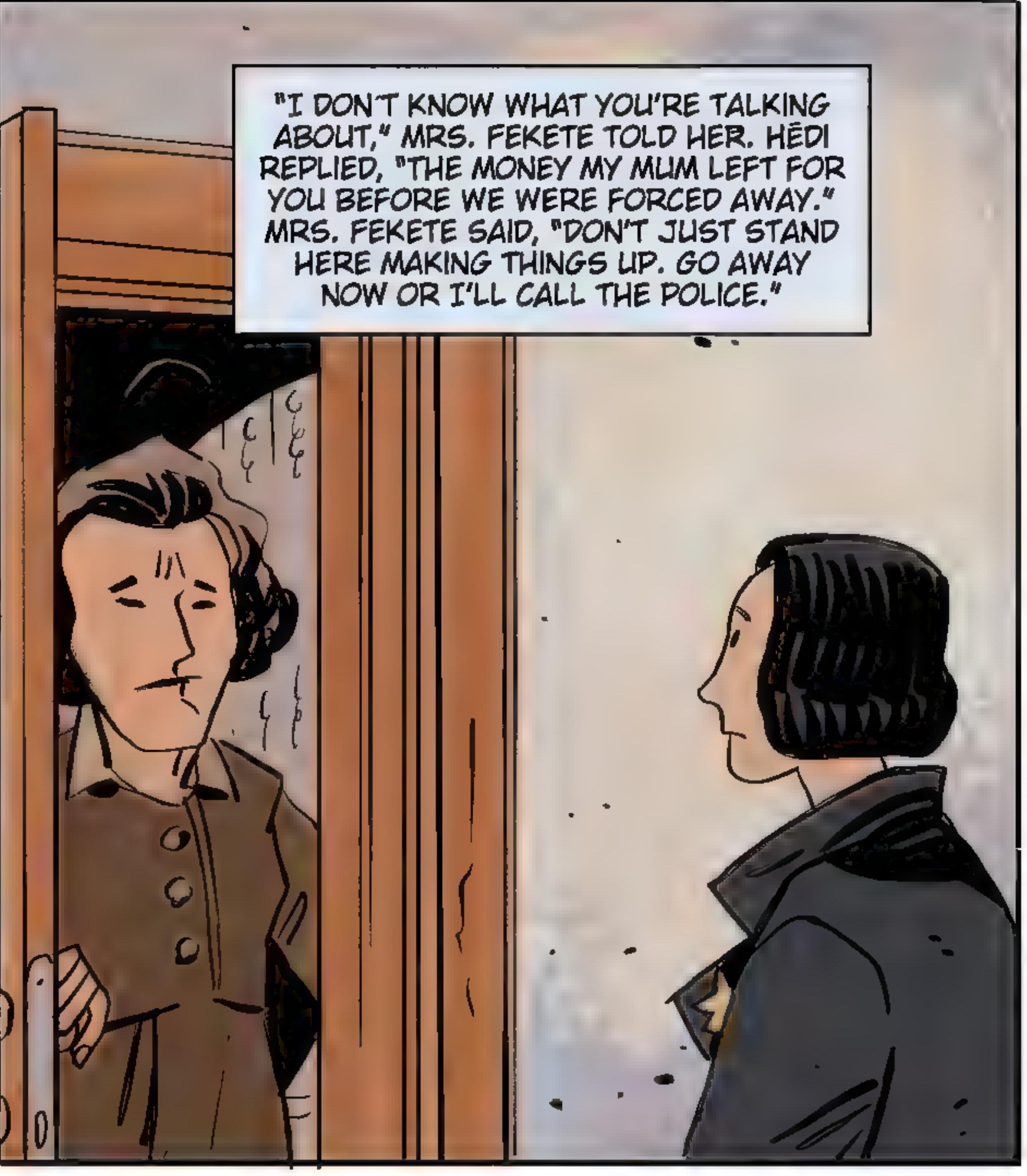
OUR STREET WAS ONE OF THE FIRST.

WE WERE SHOCKED. IT FELT LIKE SOMEONE HAD HIT US ON THE HEAD. WHY WERE WE FORCED TO LEAVE OUR BEAUTIFUL HOME?

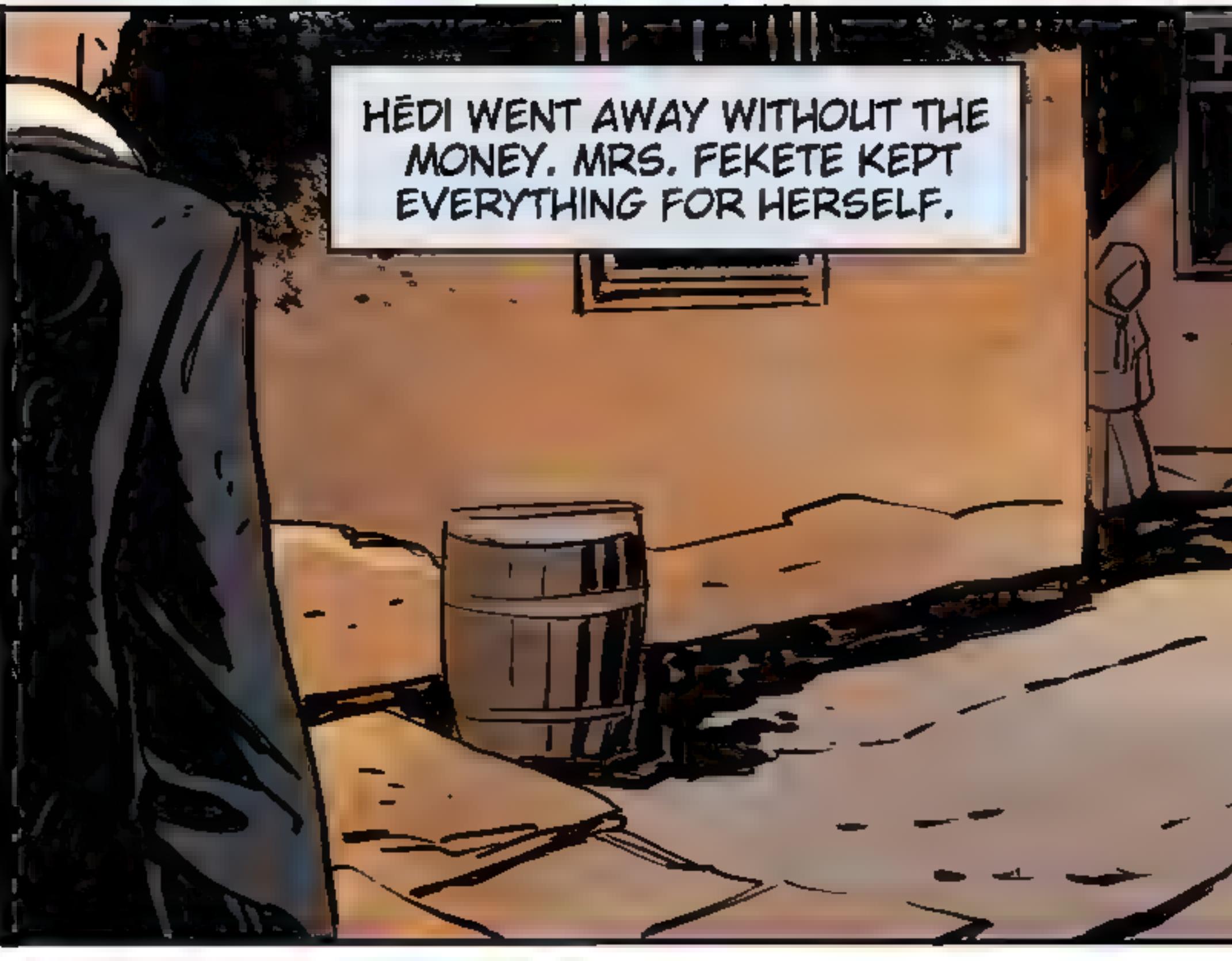


BEFORE WE LEFT, MUM HID SOME MONEY WITH OUR NEIGHBOR MRS. FEKETE. WE WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO BE SENT TO THE GHETTO. AFTER A FEW WEEKS, ALL OF THE MONEY WE'D BROUGHT WAS GONE.

EVERY DAY, GROUPS OF JEWS LEFT TO WORK IN THE CITY. MY SISTER SAID SHE COULD APPLY FOR WORK AND SNEAK AWAY TO MRS. FEKETE.



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT," MRS. FEKETE TOLD HER. HÉDI REPLIED, "THE MONEY MY MUM LEFT FOR YOU BEFORE WE WERE FORCED AWAY." MRS. FEKETE SAID, "DON'T JUST STAND HERE MAKING THINGS UP. GO AWAY NOW OR I'LL CALL THE POLICE."



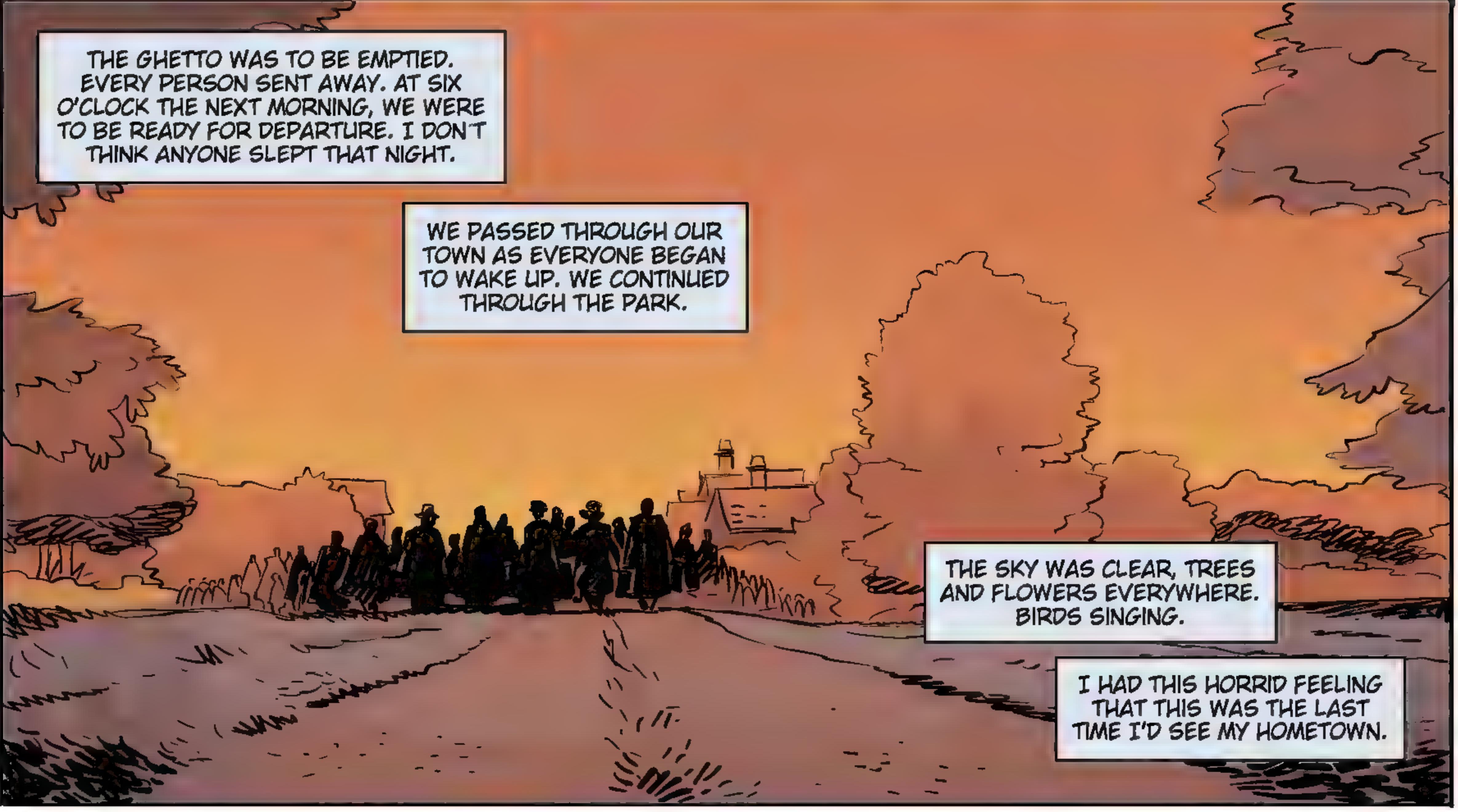
HÉDI WENT AWAY WITHOUT THE MONEY. MRS. FEKETE KEPT EVERYTHING FOR HERSELF.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS ALL OF THE JEWS IN SIGHET HAD BEEN MOVED. WE HEARD THE SOUND FROM THE DRUMMER AGAIN. BY THEN WE HAD NOTHING LEFT. I THOUGHT, IS IT OUR LIVES THEY WANT?



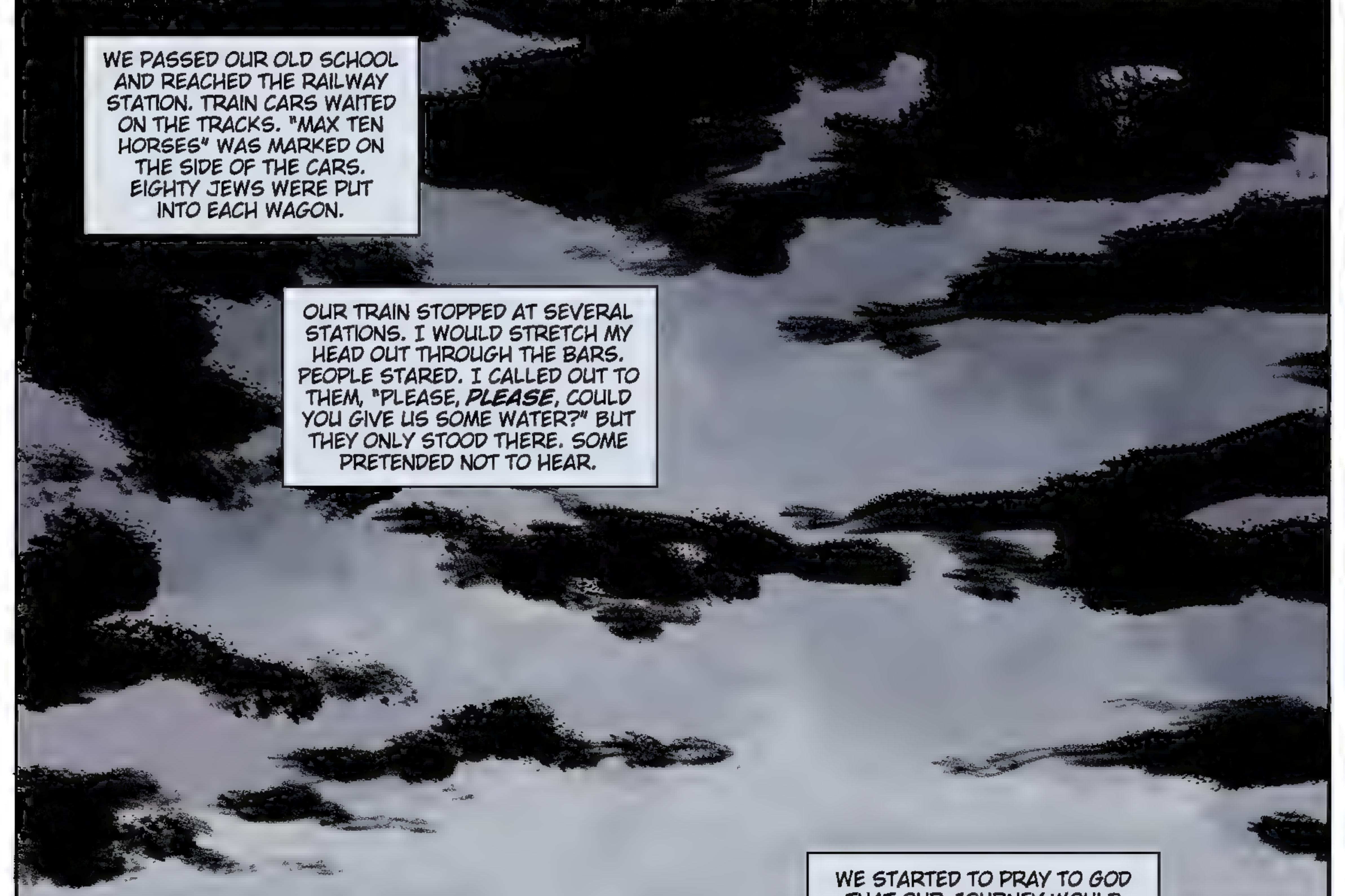
THE GHETTO WAS TO BE EMPTIED. EVERY PERSON SENT AWAY. AT SIX O'CLOCK THE NEXT MORNING, WE WERE TO BE READY FOR DEPARTURE. I DON'T THINK ANYONE SLEPT THAT NIGHT.

WE PASSED THROUGH OUR TOWN AS EVERYONE BEGAN TO WAKE UP. WE CONTINUED THROUGH THE PARK.



THE SKY WAS CLEAR, TREES AND FLOWERS EVERYWHERE. BIRDS SINGING.

I HAD THIS HORRID FEELING THAT THIS WAS THE LAST TIME I'D SEE MY HOMETOWN.



WE PASSED OUR OLD SCHOOL AND REACHED THE RAILWAY STATION. TRAIN CARS WAITED ON THE TRACKS. "MAX TEN HORSES" WAS MARKED ON THE SIDE OF THE CARS. EIGHTY JEWS WERE PLIT INTO EACH WAGON.

OUR TRAIN STOPPED AT SEVERAL STATIONS. I WOULD STRETCH MY HEAD OUT THROUGH THE BARS. PEOPLE STARED. I CALLED OUT TO THEM, "PLEASE, PLEASE, COULD YOU GIVE US SOME WATER?" BUT THEY ONLY STOOD THERE. SOME PRETENDED NOT TO HEAR.

WE STARTED TO PRAY TO GOD THAT OUR JOURNEY WOULD END. IT WAS SO HIDEOUS IN THE TRAIN CAR THAT EVEN DEATH WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER.



AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE ARRANGED IN LINES OF FIVE. THERE WERE LOTS OF PEOPLE, SO IT WAS CHAOTIC. I KNEW THEY WERE GOING TO KILL US.

I ACCEPTED MY DESTINY AND HOPED FOR A QUICK AND PAINLESS DEATH. AFTER A FEW HOURS, OUR TIME HAD COME.

THE S.S. OFFICER JUST STARED AT US. LATER WE LEARNED HE WAS THE NOTORIOUS DR. JOSEF MENGELE. HE LOOKED AT MUM AND POINTED TO THE LEFT. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO CONTINUE IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. THEY TOLD US TO UNDRESS. THE FACT THAT WE WERE UNDRESSING IN FRONT OF MEN DIDN'T EVEN SEEM TO MATTER.

WE TOOK OUR CLOTHES OFF AND PUT THEM IN A PILE, BUT KEPT OUR SHOES. I SQUEEZED MY BLACK BOOTS IN MY HANDS. WHEN I REALIZED WE WOULDN'T GET OUR CLOTHES BACK, I STUFFED MY LAST BELONGING, MY TOOTHBRUSH AND MY SILVER NECKLACE, INTO MY SHOES.

THEY TOOK AWAY THE LAST OF WHAT MADE US HUMAN. WE ALL LOOKED THE SAME. BUT WHERE WAS MY SISTER? I SHOUTED HER NAME DESPERATELY, UNTIL OUR EYES FINALLY MET. SHE TOOK MY HAND AND NEVER LET IT GO.

THEY PUSHED US INTO THE COLD WATER OF THE SHOWER ROOMS.

I WAS STILL ALIVE WHEN MORNING CAME. I WENT TO ONE OF THE POLISH JEWS WHO HAD ALREADY SPENT SOME TIME IN AUSCHWITZ.

"WHEN WILL OUR MUMS ARRIVE?" I ASKED. SHE STARED AT ME LIKE I WAS OUT OF MY MIND.

DO YOU SEE THAT CHIMNEY?

YES?

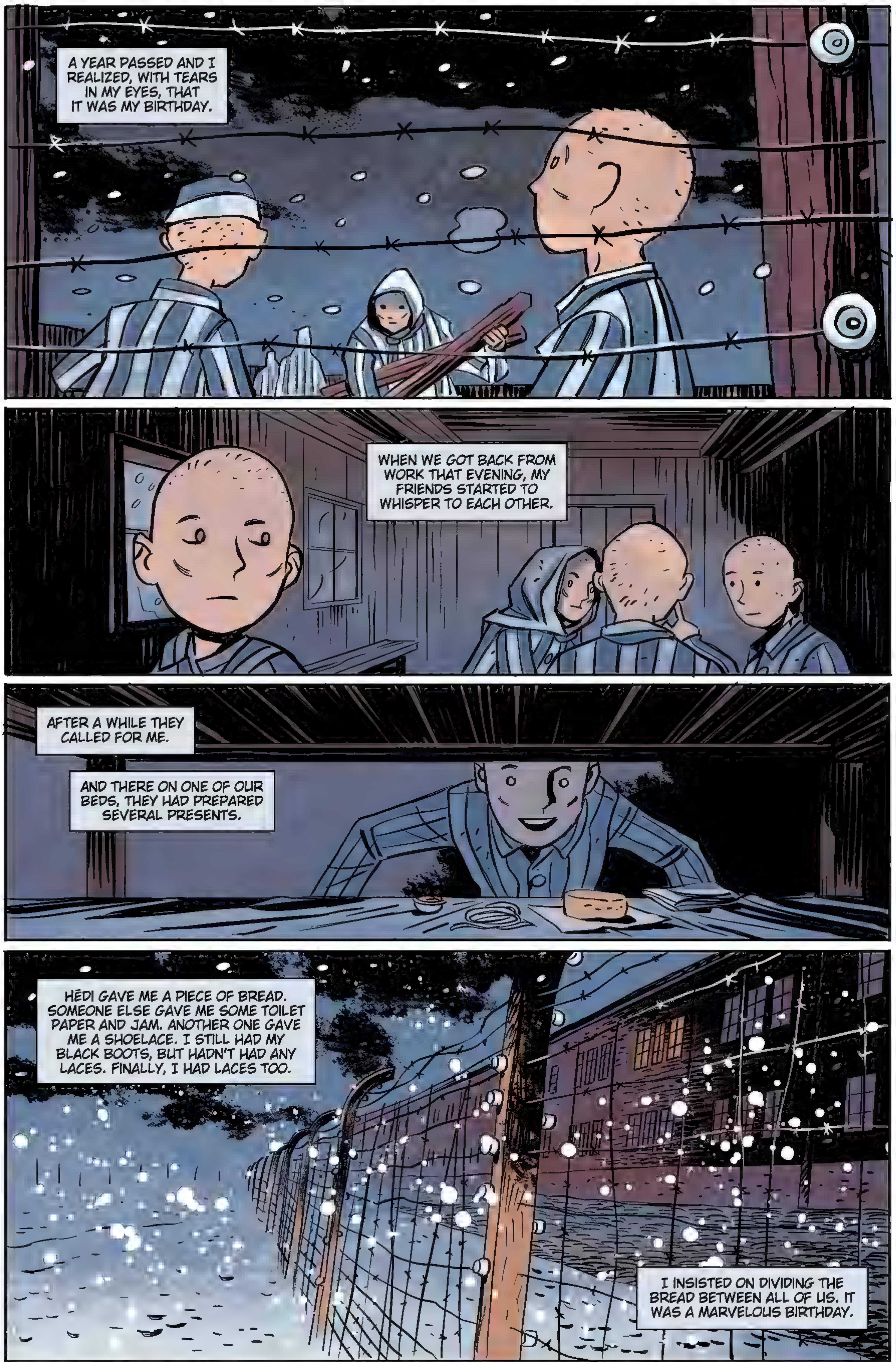
INSIDE, YOUR PARENTS WILL BURN. YOU'LL NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN.

THIS IS NOT A HOME. THIS IS AN EXTERMINATION CAMP.

ONE DAY, WE HEARD THAT TWO HUNDRED WOMEN WERE NEEDED FOR LABOR. WE ARRIVED IN HAMBURG AND WERE TRANSPORTED TO A CAMP. WE WOULD STAY THERE FOR THE COMING DAYS.

WE SWITCHED CAMPS MANY TIMES BEFORE WE ARRIVED IN HAMBURG-EIDELSTEDT.

AS LONG AS WE COULD WORK, WE GOT TO LIVE. IT WAS RAINY AND COLD AND THERE WAS LITTLE FOOD. EVERY NIGHT, AIR RAID ALARMS SOUNDED AND BOMBS FELL ALL AROUND US.



A YEAR PASSED AND I REALIZED, WITH TEARS IN MY EYES, THAT IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY.

WHEN WE GOT BACK FROM WORK THAT EVENING, MY FRIENDS STARTED TO WHISPER TO EACH OTHER.

AFTER A WHILE THEY CALLED FOR ME.

AND THERE ON ONE OF OUR BEDS, THEY HAD PREPARED SEVERAL PRESENTS.

HÉDI GAVE ME A PIECE OF BREAD. SOMEONE ELSE GAVE ME SOME TOILET PAPER AND JAM. ANOTHER ONE GAVE ME A SHOELACE. I STILL HAD MY BLACK BOOTS, BUT HADN'T HAD ANY LACES. FINALLY, I HAD LACES TOO.

I INSISTED ON DIVIDING THE BREAD BETWEEN ALL OF US. IT WAS A MARVELOUS BIRTHDAY.

IN THE SPRING OF 1945, WE KNEW THE GERMANS WERE LOSING THE WAR. THE QUESTION WAS WHETHER WE COULD LIVE TO SEE THE LIBERATION. THEN THE GERMANS CLOSED THE CAMP--WE WERE BEING SENT ELSEWHERE. WE HEARD A RUMOR THAT WE WERE TO BE KILLED. WE BOARDED ANOTHER TRAIN WITH NO IDEA WHERE WE WERE GOING.



THE TRAIN STOPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. LOUD NOISES AND GUNSHOTS CAME FROM THE WOODS. SCARED TO DEATH, WE WAITED IN THE TRAIN CAR, THINKING WE'D BE SHOT IF WE LEFT.

KTHUMM

BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA

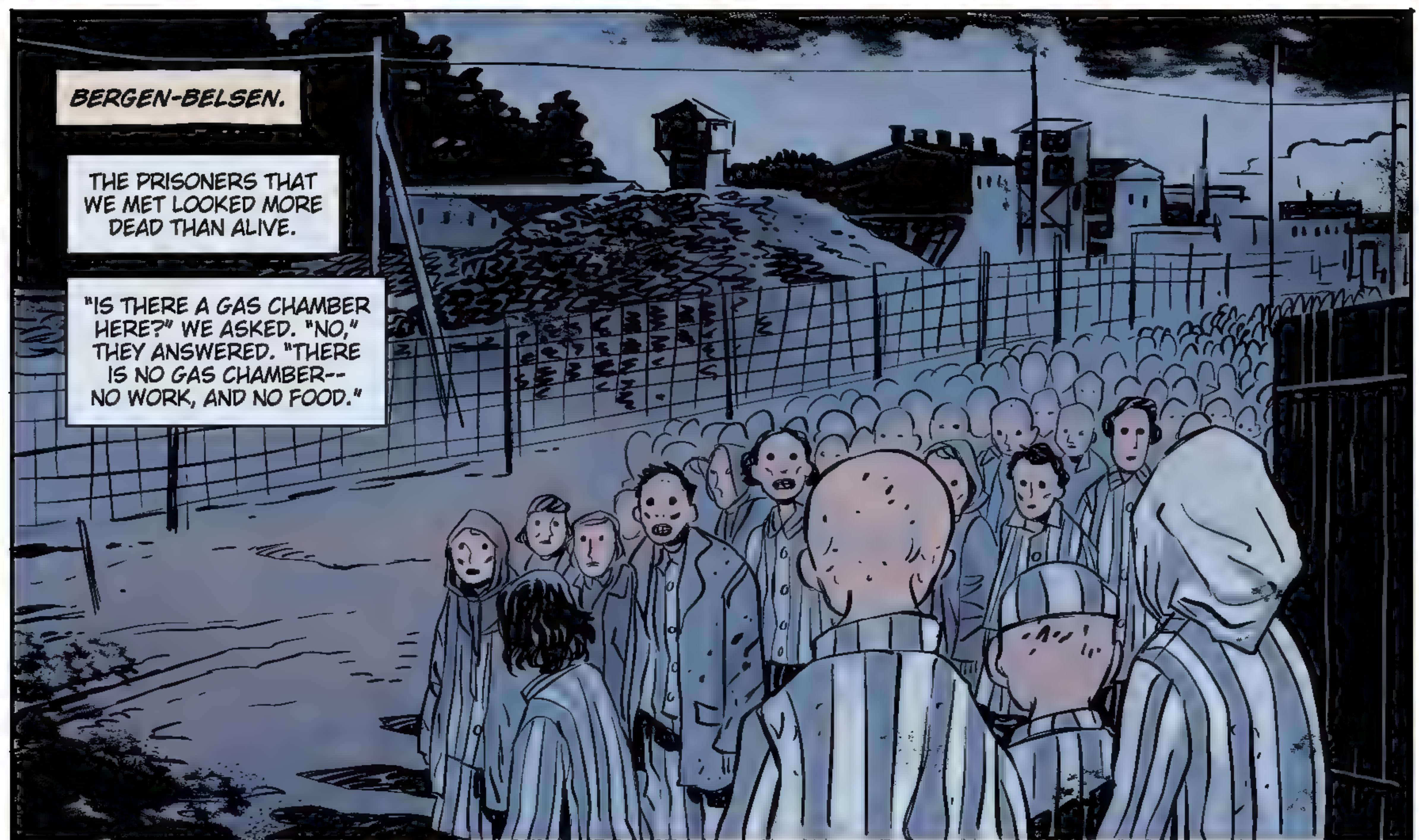
EVENTUALLY THE TRAIN CONTINUED.

BOOM

BERGEN-BELSEN.

THE PRISONERS THAT WE MET LOOKED MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE.

"IS THERE A GAS CHAMBER HERE?" WE ASKED. "NO," THEY ANSWERED. "THERE IS NO GAS CHAMBER--NO WORK, AND NO FOOD."



WE WERE RELIEVED THAT THERE WERE NO GAS CHAMBERS, BUT IT ALSO FELT GOOD TO KNOW THERE WAS NO WORK.

WE GOT TO OUR BARRACK. NOTHING HAPPENED. WE JUST SAT OR LAID ON OUR BUNKS. NO ONE CARED ABOUT US.

THE DAYS PASSED, AND THERE WAS NO FOOD.

WE FOUND SOME WATER IN AN OLD TOILET. WE WOULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED IF WE HADN'T FOUND THAT.



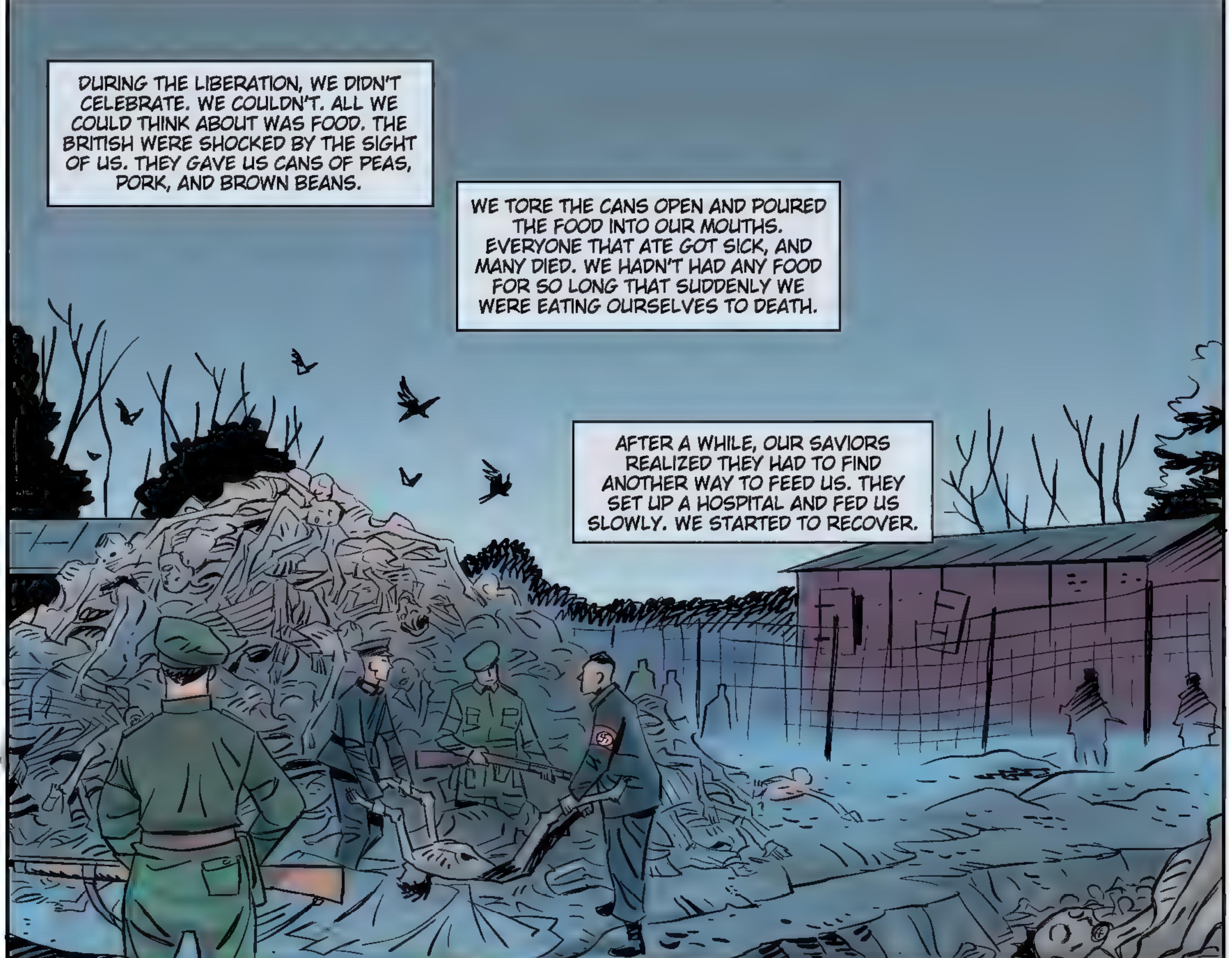
ONE DAY A FRIEND CAME INTO OUR BARRACK.

I SAW FOREIGN SOLDIERS. I THINK THEY'RE ENGLISH.



FROM THE WINDOW, I COULD SEE SOLDIERS IN GREEN UNIFORMS. I WENT OUTSIDE TO SEE IF SHE WAS RIGHT.

BERGEN-BELSEN WAS LIBERATED BY BRITISH TROOPS.



DURING THE LIBERATION, WE DIDN'T CELEBRATE. WE COULDN'T. ALL WE COULD THINK ABOUT WAS FOOD. THE BRITISH WERE SHOCKED BY THE SIGHT OF US. THEY GAVE US CANS OF PEAS, PORK, AND BROWN BEANS.

WE TORE THE CANS OPEN AND POURED THE FOOD INTO OUR MOUTHS. EVERYONE THAT ATE GOT SICK, AND MANY DIED. WE HADN'T HAD ANY FOOD FOR SO LONG THAT SUDDENLY WE WERE EATING OURSELVES TO DEATH.

AFTER A WHILE, OUR SAVIORS REALIZED THEY HAD TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO FEED US. THEY SET UP A HOSPITAL AND FED US SLOWLY. WE STARTED TO RECOVER.

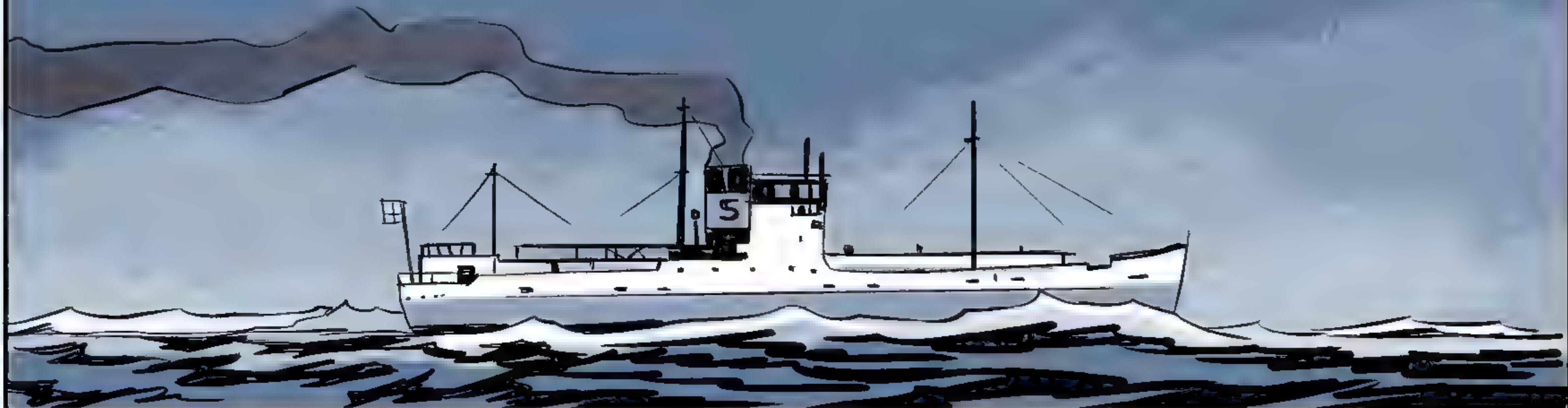


ONE DAY A KNOCK CAME AT OUR DOOR. THREE WOMEN FROM THE SWEDISH RED CROSS ASKED US IF WE WANTED TO GO TO SWEDEN.

ALL THE SURVIVORS COULD SPEND SIX MONTHS RECOVERING IN SWEDEN. AFTER THAT WE WOULD BE SENT BACK TO OUR OWN COUNTRIES.

OUR COUSIN SUSSIE, HÉDI, AND I HAD PROMISED EACH OTHER WE'D STAY TOGETHER NO MATTER WHAT. WE ALL DECIDED THAT IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

A SHIP TOOK US TO MALMOE, WHERE WE STOOD ON SWEDISH SOIL FOR THE FIRST TIME.



IN MALMOE, WE WERE HOSTED IN THE LINNÉ SCHOOL. DOCTORS EXAMINED US AND WE WERE GIVEN FOOD AND CLOTHES.

WE STAYED THERE FOR THREE WEEKS IN A KIND OF QUARANTINE. THEY WERE AFRAID WE WOULD SPREAD DISEASES TO THE LOCALS.

WE ARRIVED IN AN OLD GUEST HOUSE OUTSIDE OF A TOWN CALLED ALINGSÅS. A BEAUTIFUL AND SMALL PLACE CALLED HJÄLMARED. THERE, REFUGEES WERE WELCOME.

NEXT STOP WAS A REFUGEE CAMP OUTSIDE OF STOCKHOLM, AT LOVÖ. THAT IS WHERE HÉDI'S LIFE AND MY OWN LIFE WERE SAVED.

THE FIRST THING WE DID AT LINNÉ SCHOOL WAS EAT. WE ATE AND ATE. WHAT WE COULDN'T EAT, WE HID UNDER OUR PILLOWS. WHO KNEW IF WE'D EVER GET FOOD AGAIN?

IN STOCKHOLM I MET HANS FRÄNKEL. THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HAD ARRANGED A DANCE FOR THE YOUTH.

I WORE A RED DRESS. WHEN HANS LAID EYES ON ME, HE TOLD HIS FRIEND, "I'M GOING TO MARRY HER."



AND THAT'S WHAT HE DID.



Livia Fränkel lives in Stockholm. She has three children, six grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. For many years, Livia has worked for the Survivors of the Holocaust Association and is often in schools, telling her story. In 1992, Livia's sister Hédi published a book telling the story of their experiences during the war.

Selma

I WAS BORN IN FRANKFURT, GERMANY. MY DAD WAS A GOLDSMITH AND HE OWNED HIS OWN JEWELRY SHOP.

WE WERE LIVING IN LODZ WHEN THE GERMANS ATTACKED POLAND.

ONE YEAR AFTER THE CRYSTAL NIGHT, THE GERMANS CAME AND BURNED ALL OF THE SYNAGOGUES IN LODZ TO THE GROUND.

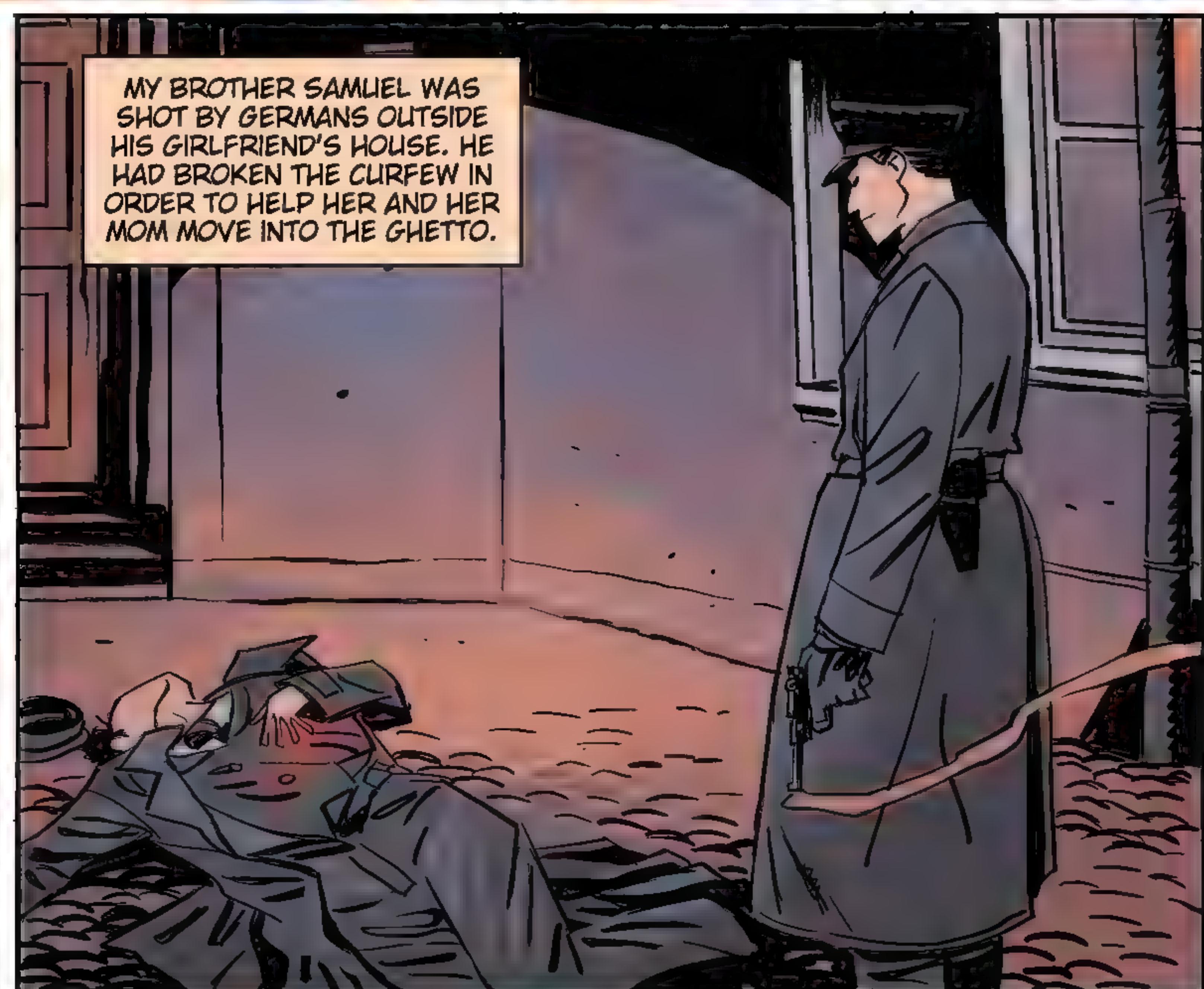
THEY TOLD US THAT ALL OF THE JEWS HAD TO BE GATHERED TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE.

WE SEARCHED FOR A PLACE TO STAY. THE GERMANS WENT FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE TO TRY AND SPEED UP THEIR SORTING PROCESS.



FOR EVERY FAMILY THAT HADN'T LEFT THEIR HOMES YET, THE GERMANS WOULD SHOOT EITHER THE FATHER OR THE ELDEST SON TO DEATH. THE REST OF THE FAMILY WOULD BE FORCED AWAY WHILE THE DEAD WERE LEFT LYING IN THE STREET.

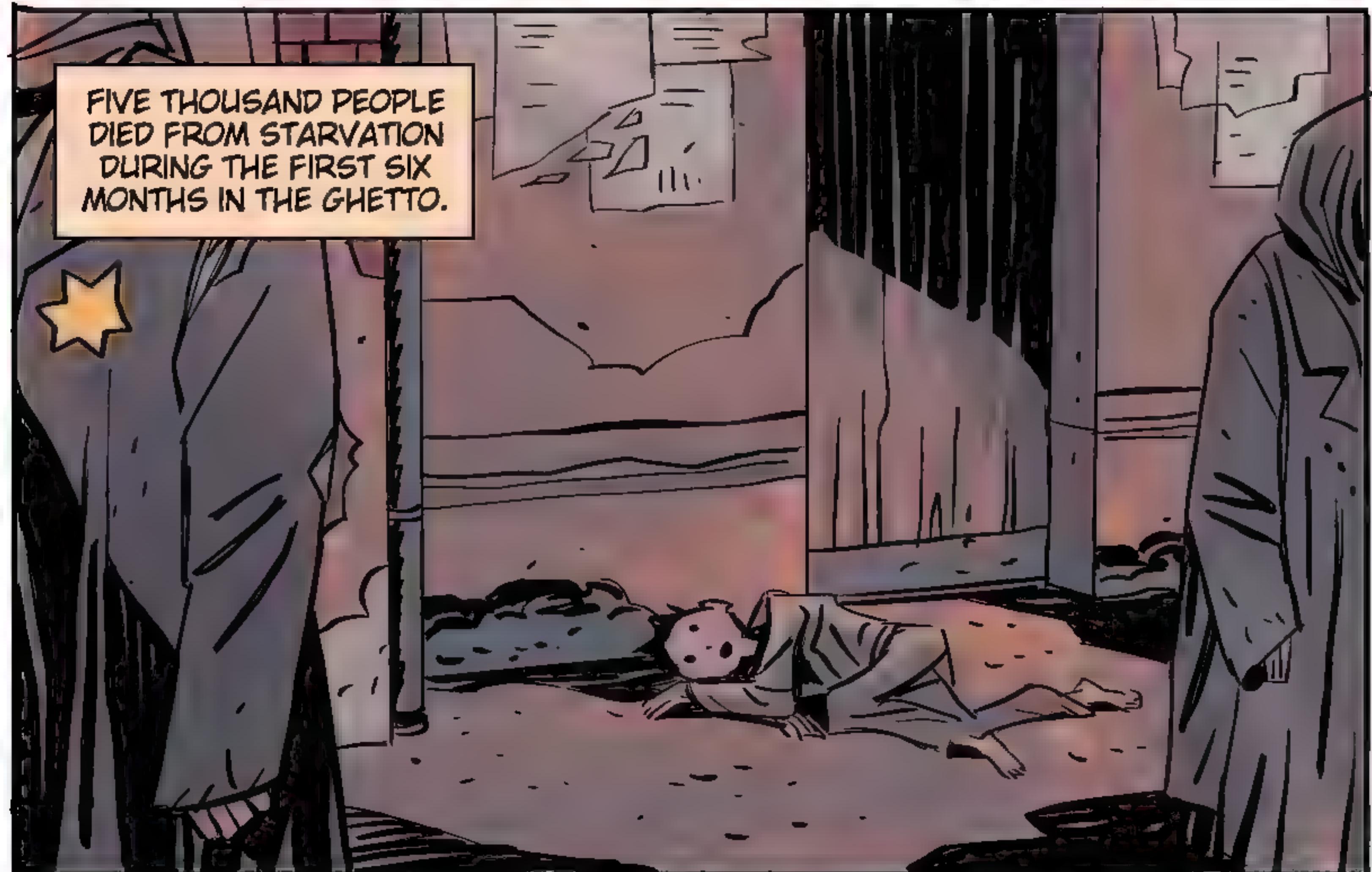
MY BROTHER SAMUEL WAS SHOT BY GERMANS OUTSIDE HIS GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE. HE HAD BROKEN THE CURFEW IN ORDER TO HELP HER AND HER MOM MOVE INTO THE GHETTO.



WE MOVED INTO THE GHETTO A FEW DAYS LATER.

WE HAD TO PAY FOR THE BARBED WIRE FENCES AND THE WALLS THAT SURROUNDED THE GHETTO. ON MAY 1, THE GERMANS SEALED THE GHETTO, AND WE COULDN'T LEAVE.





BY AUGUST, ONLY A FRACTION OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THE GHETTO WAS LEFT. THE OFFICERS TOLD US THAT WE'D BE MOVED SOMEWHERE ELSE. MY MOM, MY SISTER PAULA, AND I WENT TO THE STATION.

WE CARRIED OUR THINGS IN RUCKSACKS. THE NEXT MORNING, WE WERE LOADED ONTO A TRAIN, AND TRAVELED ALL DAY. THE RAILWAY TRACK HAD BEEN DAMAGED BY BOMBS. AT NIGHT THE TRAIN STOOD STILL BY THE SIDE OF THE TRACKS.

IN THE MORNING WE ARRIVED AT A RAILWAY YARD, IN A CHAOS OF COMMANDER'S ROARS, WHISTLES, AND OUR OWN SCREAMS. PRISONERS IN STRIPED CLOTHES SEPARATED THE MEN FROM THE WOMEN.

THEY BROUGHT US TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE CAMP. HE POINTED TO THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT WITH HIS LEATHER WHIP. PLAYFULLY AND CALMLY, HE DECIDED WHO LIVED AND WHO DIED.

HE CHOSE MY MOM AND KILLED HER ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN THAT DAY.

AFTER THE FIRST NIGHT WE WERE
COMMANDED TO MARCH NAKED IN
THE COURTYARD. THE CHOSEN
ONES WOULD BE PUT TO WORK.

WE HAD TO RUN IN FRONT OF
THE S.S. MEN, NAKED. MY SISTER
AND I WERE AMONG THE FIVE
HUNDRED AND TWENTY SELECTED
FOR SLAVE LABOR AT KRUPPS
WEAPON FACTORY IN BERLIN.

WE WERE TAKEN BACK TO
THE RAILWAY. WE LAY ON THE
GROUND IN THE DRIZZLING RAIN,
WAITING FOR THE TRAINS TO TAKE
US TO BERLIN IN THE MORNING.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
A WOMAN CAME TO ME AND
PAULA. SHE SAID THAT SHE
HAD BEEN WITH OUR SISTER
ANNA WHEN SHE WAS
CAPTURED IN THE GHETTO.

ANNA WAS
NOT ALIVE.

DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS IN BERLIN, WE WERE KEPT IN QUARANTINE. AFTER THAT WE STARTED WORKING AT KRUPPS. MY SLAVE NUMBER WAS ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN. PAULA'S WAS ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN.

ONE SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY 1945, ALL OF BERLIN CAUGHT FIRE. THE WARM AND SUNNY DAY TURNED INTO NIGHT BECAUSE OF ALL THE SMOKE. WE SAT IN THE TRENCHES WITHOUT A ROOF.

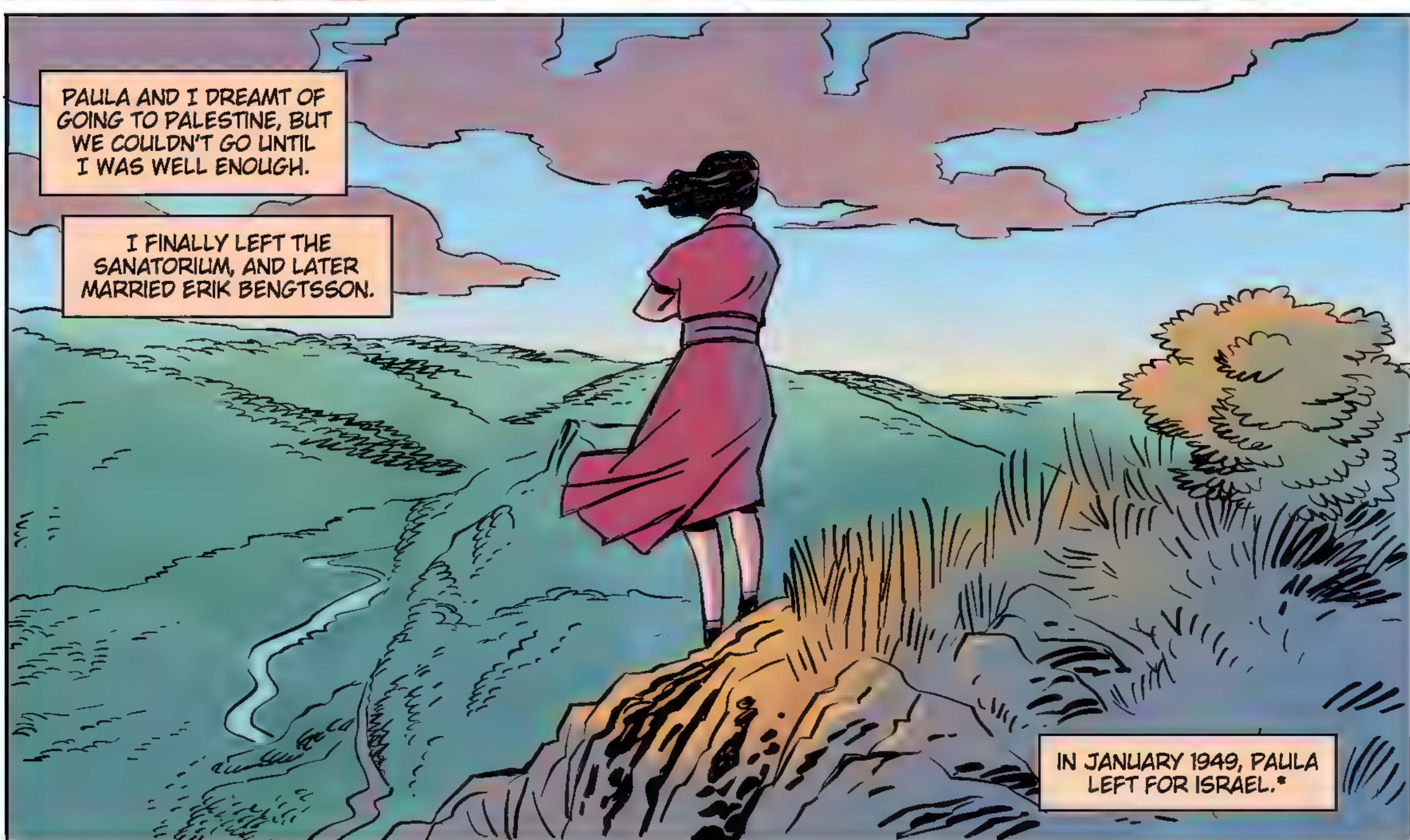
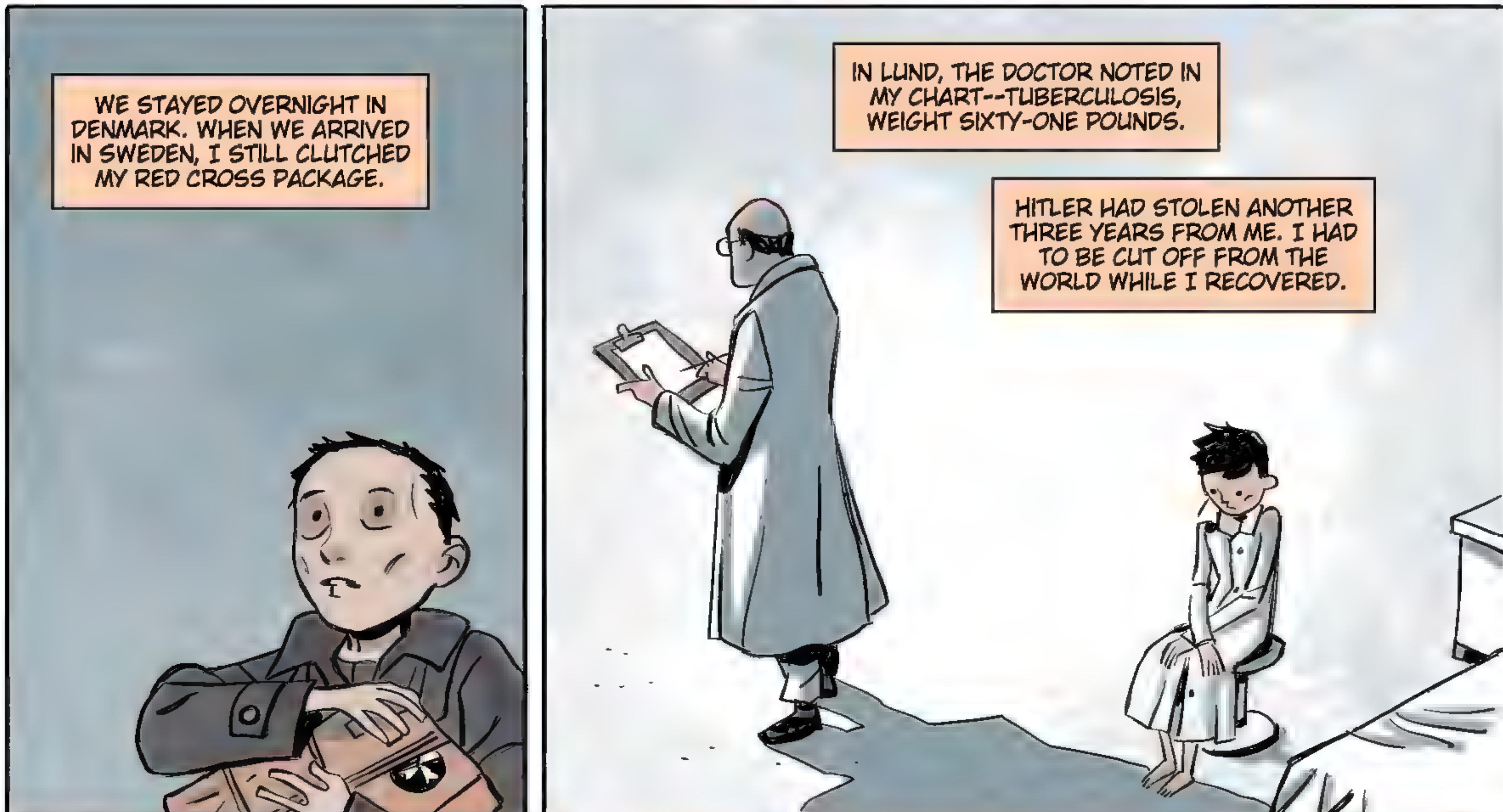
THE RUSSIANS WERE CLOSING IN ON BERLIN.

THE BOMBS FELL ALL AROUND US. ONE OF THE BARRACKS BURNED DOWN. WE REALIZED THAT THE END WAS CLOSE.

WE WERE EVACUATED TO ORANIENBURG.

TWO DAYS LATER, WE WERE MOVED TO A WOMEN'S CAMP IN RAVENSBRÜCK.

IT ONLY TOOK US SIX HOURS TO GET THERE.



*THE STATE OF ISRAEL WAS ANNOUNCED IN 1948

FROM OUR LARGE FAMILY,
PAULA AND I WERE THE
ONLY TWO SURVIVORS.





After leaving the sanatorium outside Varberg, **Selma Bengtsson** stayed in Varberg for the rest of her life. Together with her husband Erik, Selma had a son and many grandchildren. Selma and her family remained close to her sister Paula and her family in Israel.

MAKÓ,
SOUTHEASTERN
HUNGARY.

Susanna

MY MUM AND DAD RAN A
SMALL GROCERY STORE.
WE SPENT ALMOST ALL
OUR TIME IN THE STORE
AND THE LITTLE KITCHEN.

MY FAMILY WAS POOR. WE
LIVED ON WHAT LITTLE WE
HAD. WE DIDN'T HAVE A
RADIO OR A TELEPHONE.

ALL OF THE NEWSPAPERS IN
HUNGARY WERE CENSORED THEN.
YOU HAD TO READ BETWEEN THE
LINES AND TRY TO GUESS WHAT
WAS ACTUALLY GOING ON IN
EUROPE.

WE HAD A TEACHER THAT HATED US BECAUSE WE WERE JEWISH. SHE MADE US WRITE OUR ESSAYS ON SATURDAYS. TO ME THAT WASN'T A PROBLEM-- MY FAMILY WASN'T RELIGIOUS AND WE DIDN'T CELEBRATE SHABBAT OR ANY OTHER JEWISH HOLIDAYS.

THROUGHOUT THE SPRING SEMESTER, THE TEACHER EXPLAINED WHERE THE GERMANS WERE. SHE ADDED, "THEY'LL BE HERE SOON AND WE'LL GET RID OF ALL THE JEWS." SHE REPEATED THAT TO US EVERY LESSON.

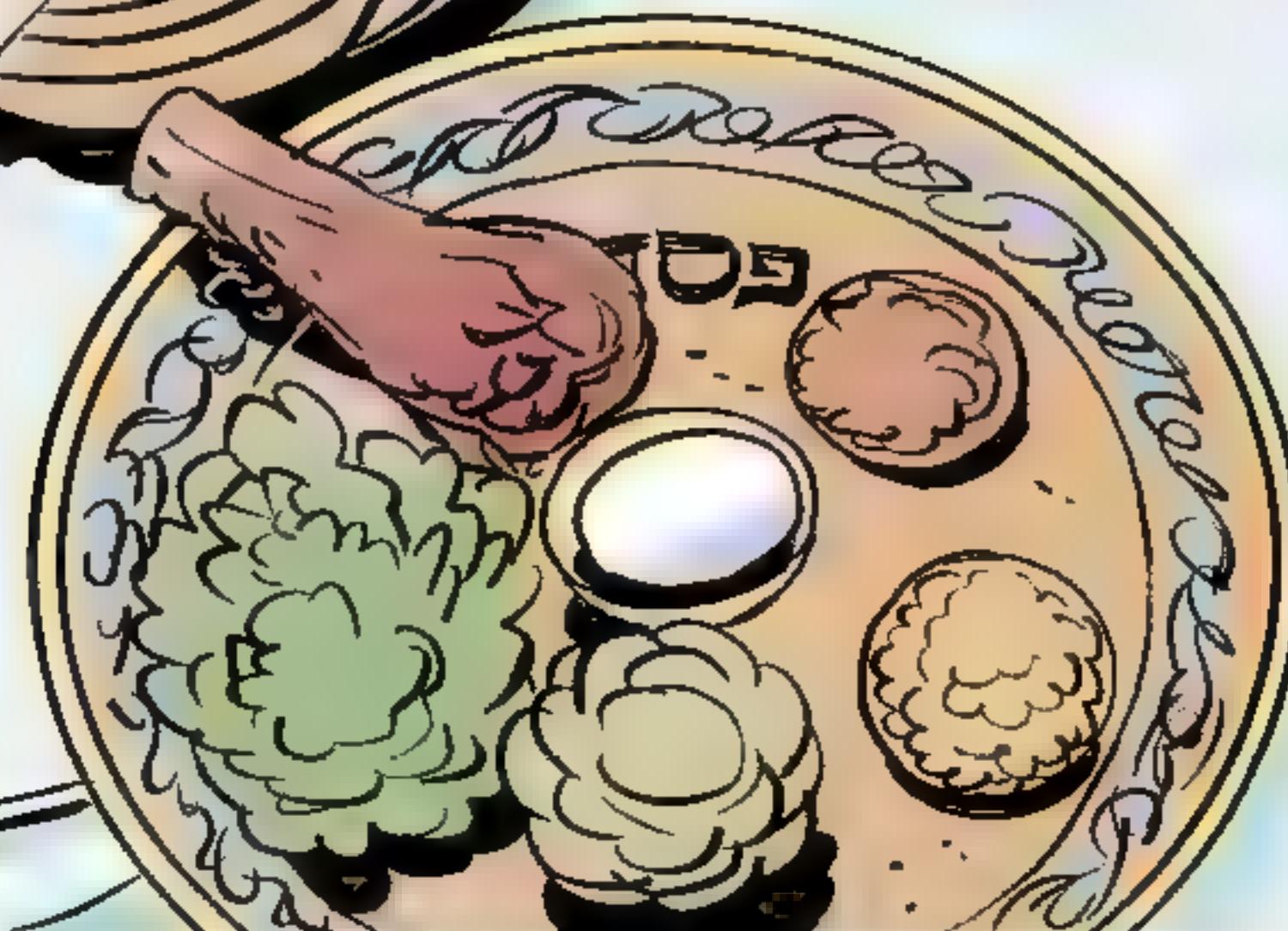


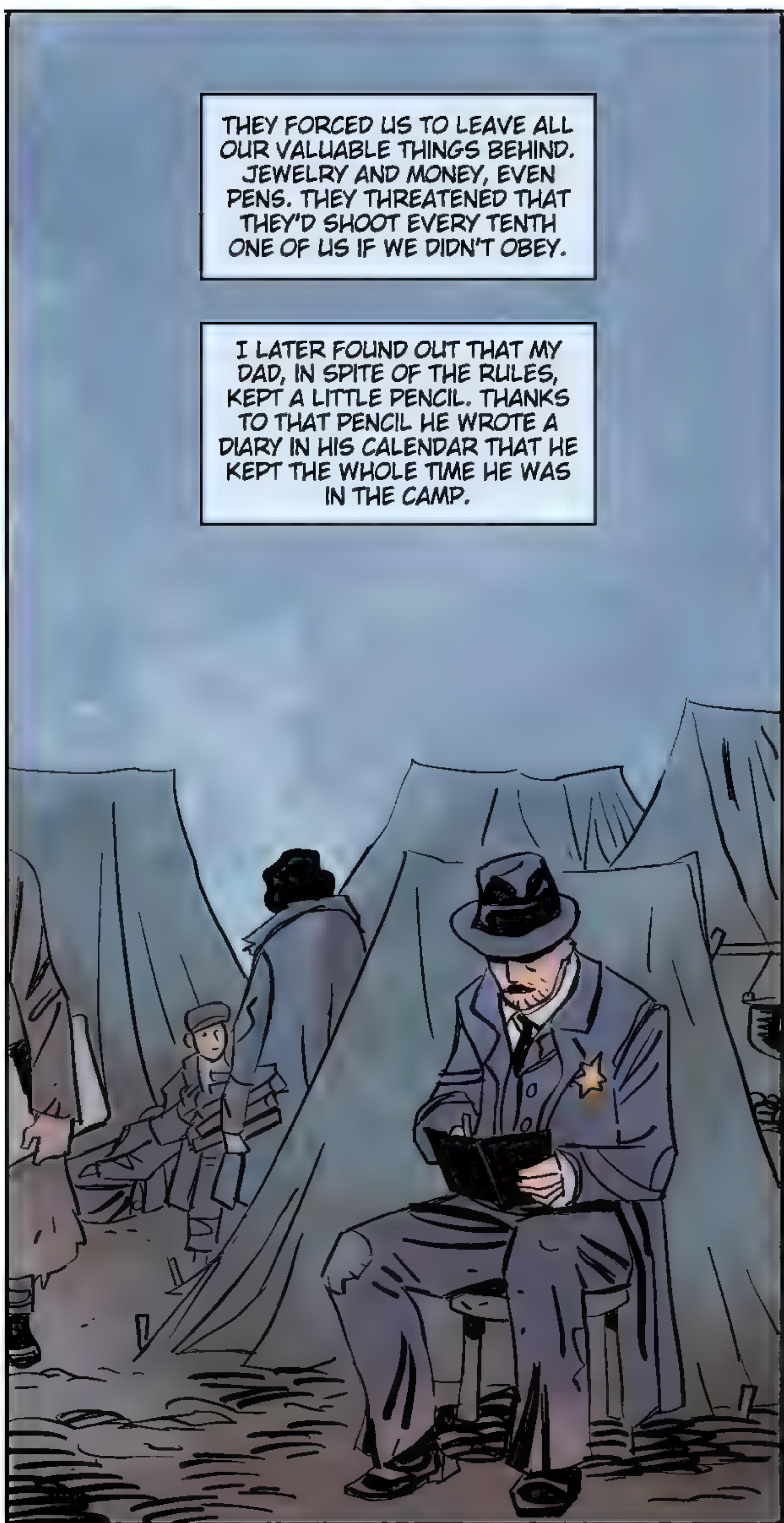
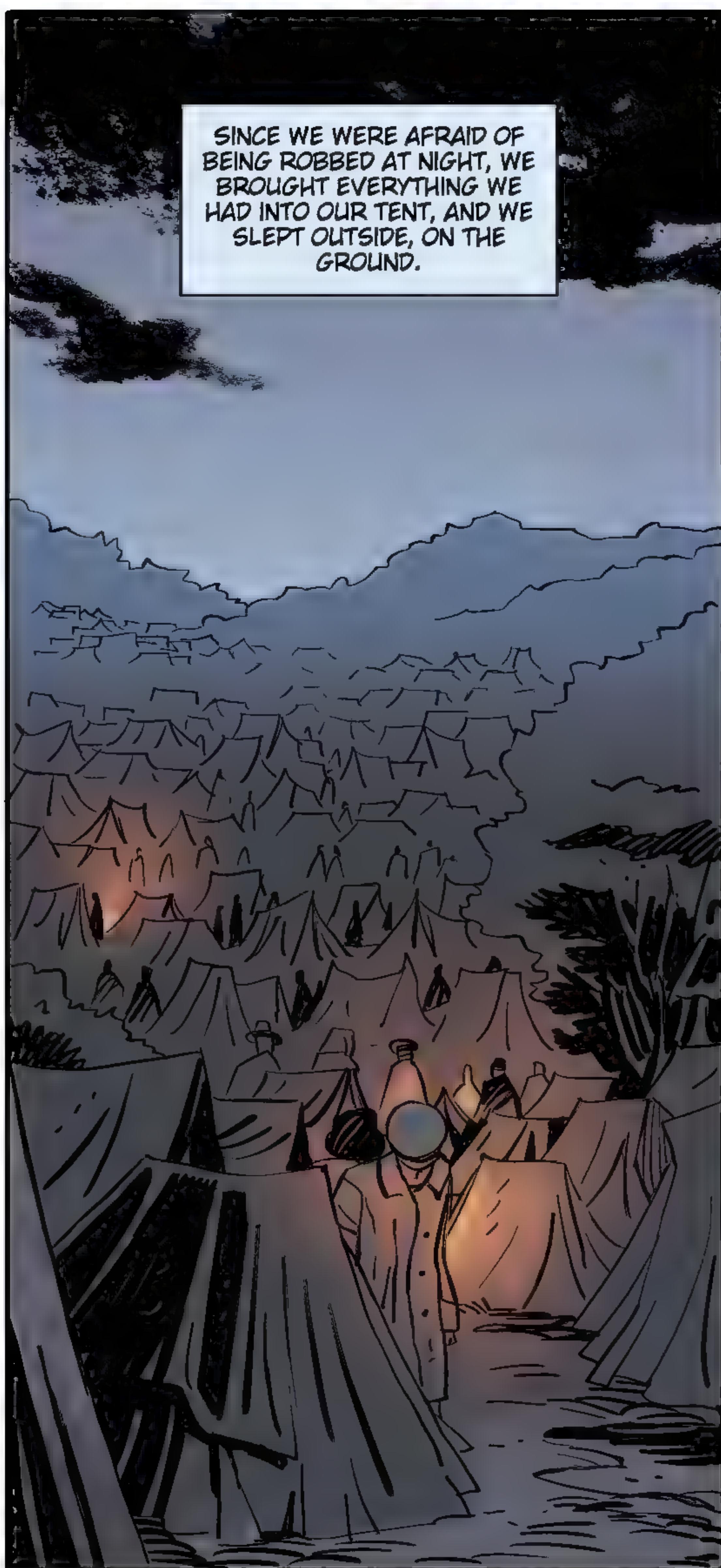
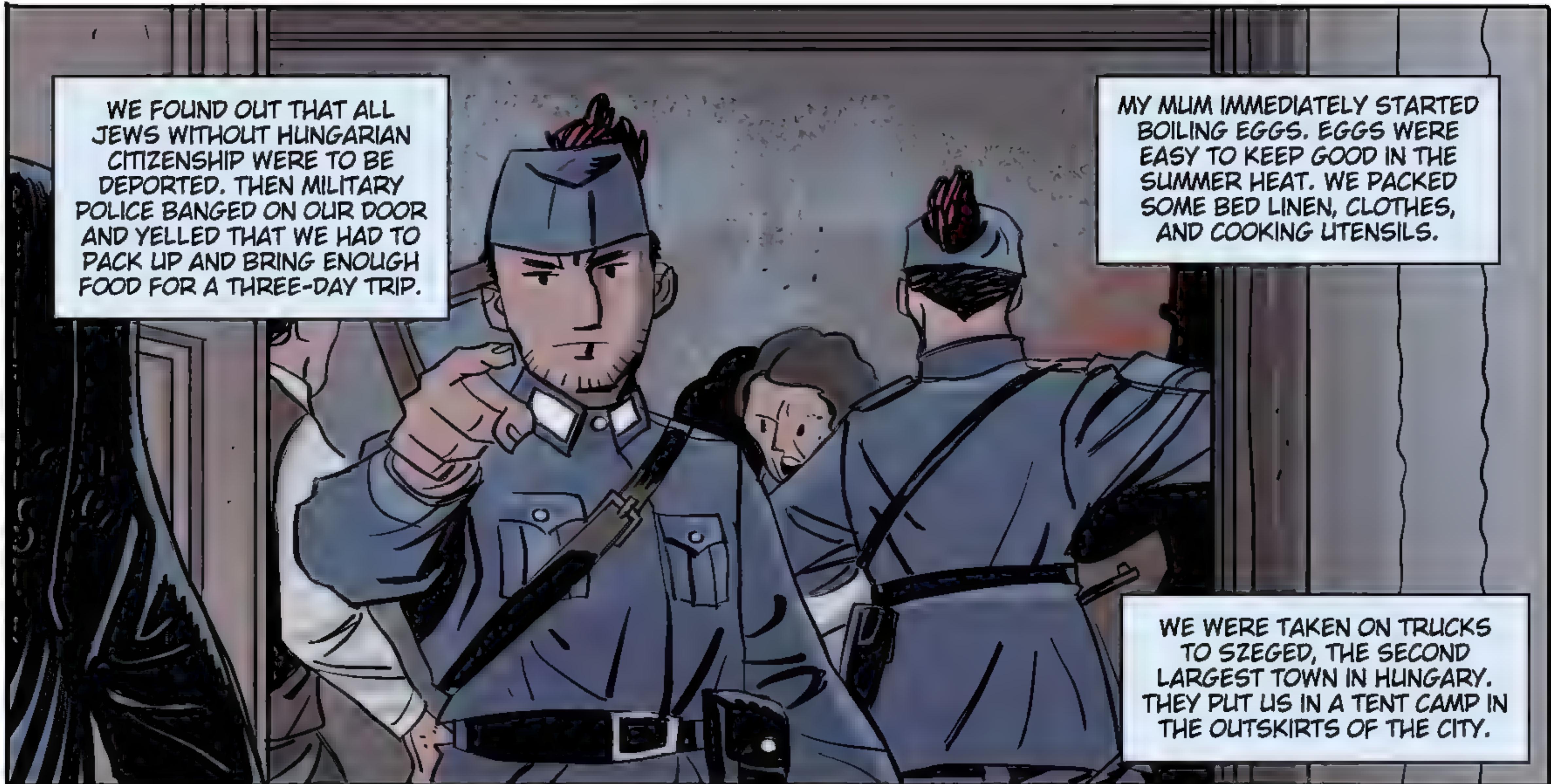
WE HEARD THAT ALL JEWS IN MAKÓ HAD BEEN ORDERED TO MOVE TO TWO DIFFERENT, WORN-DOWN GHETTOS IN THE TOWN.

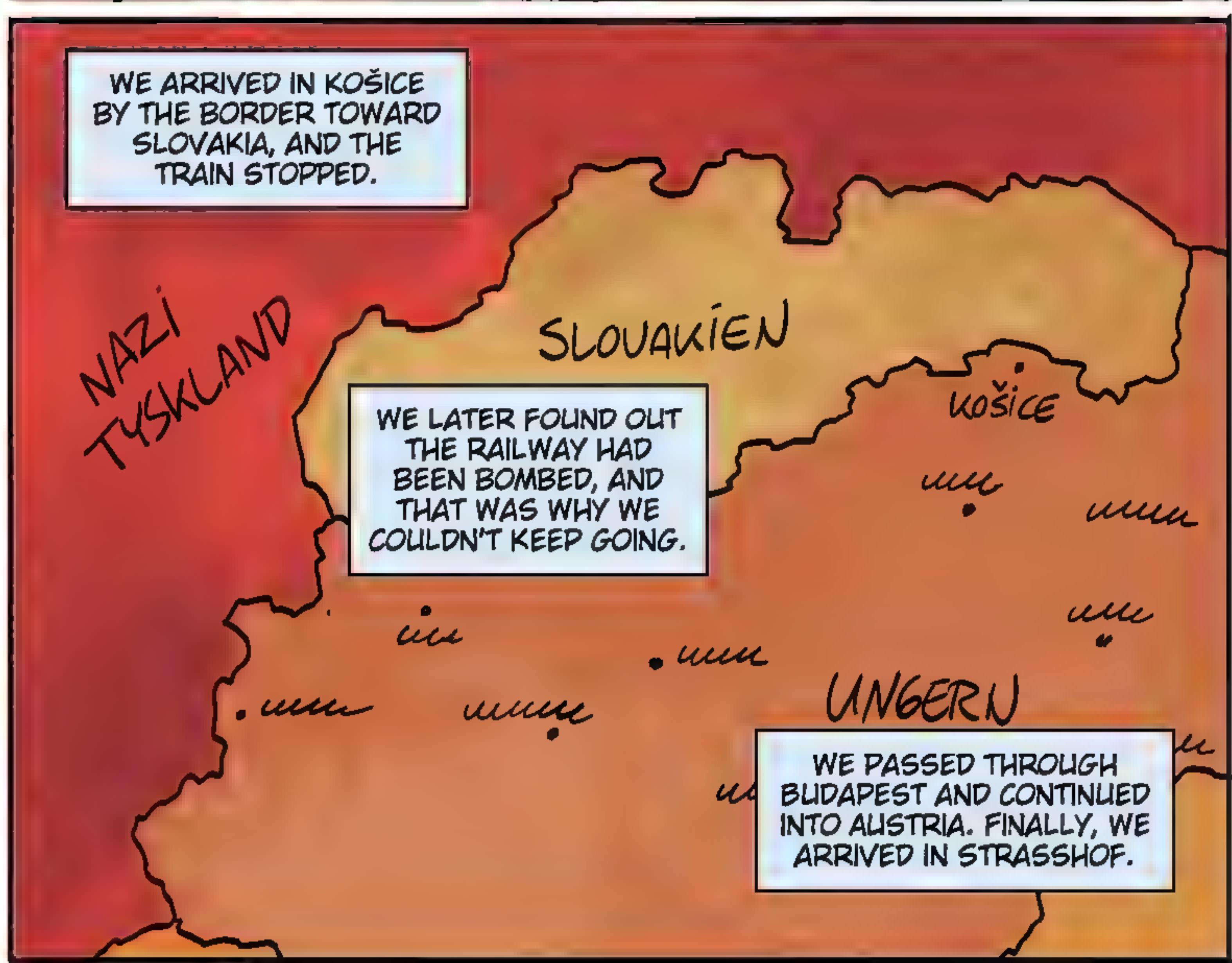
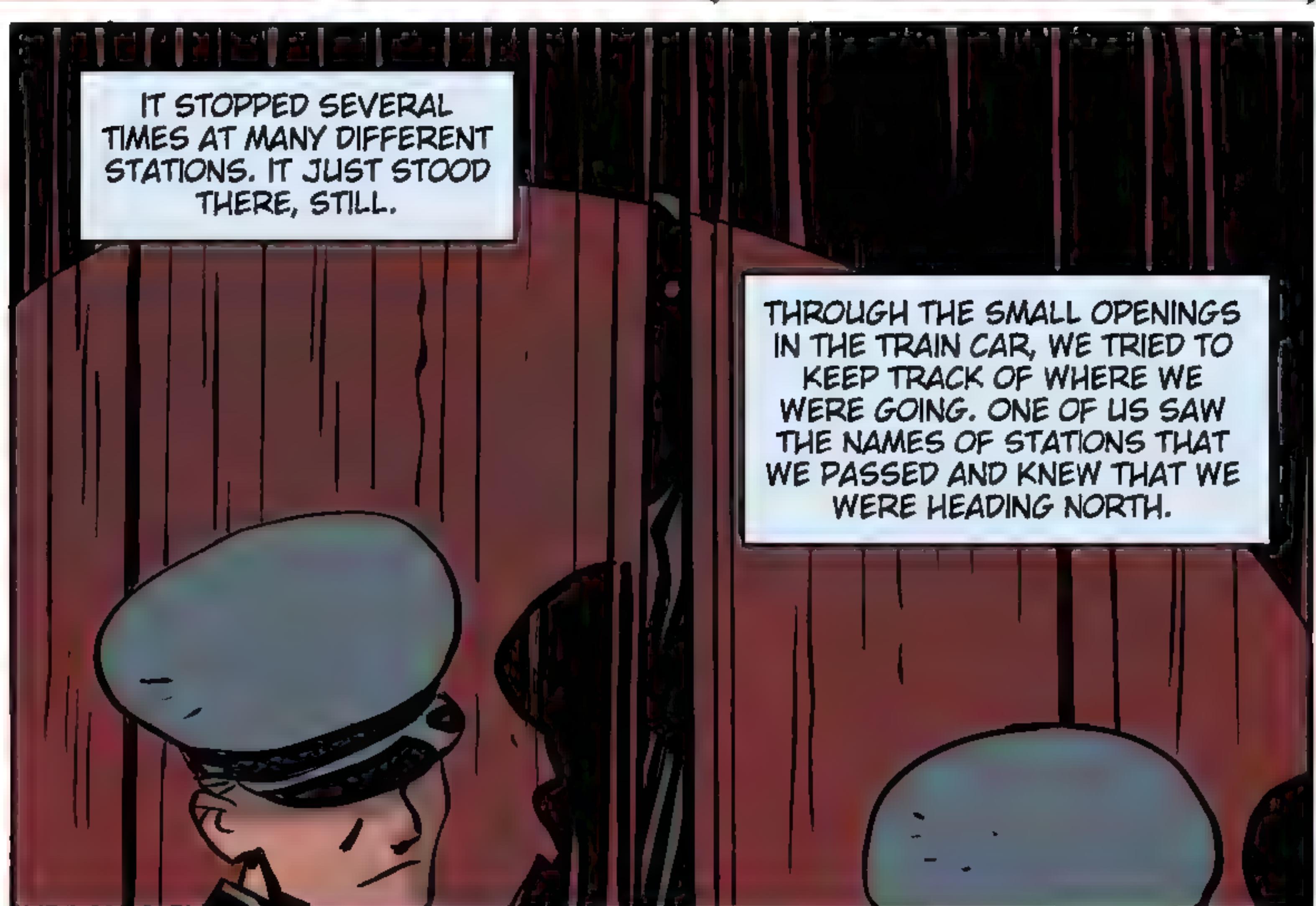
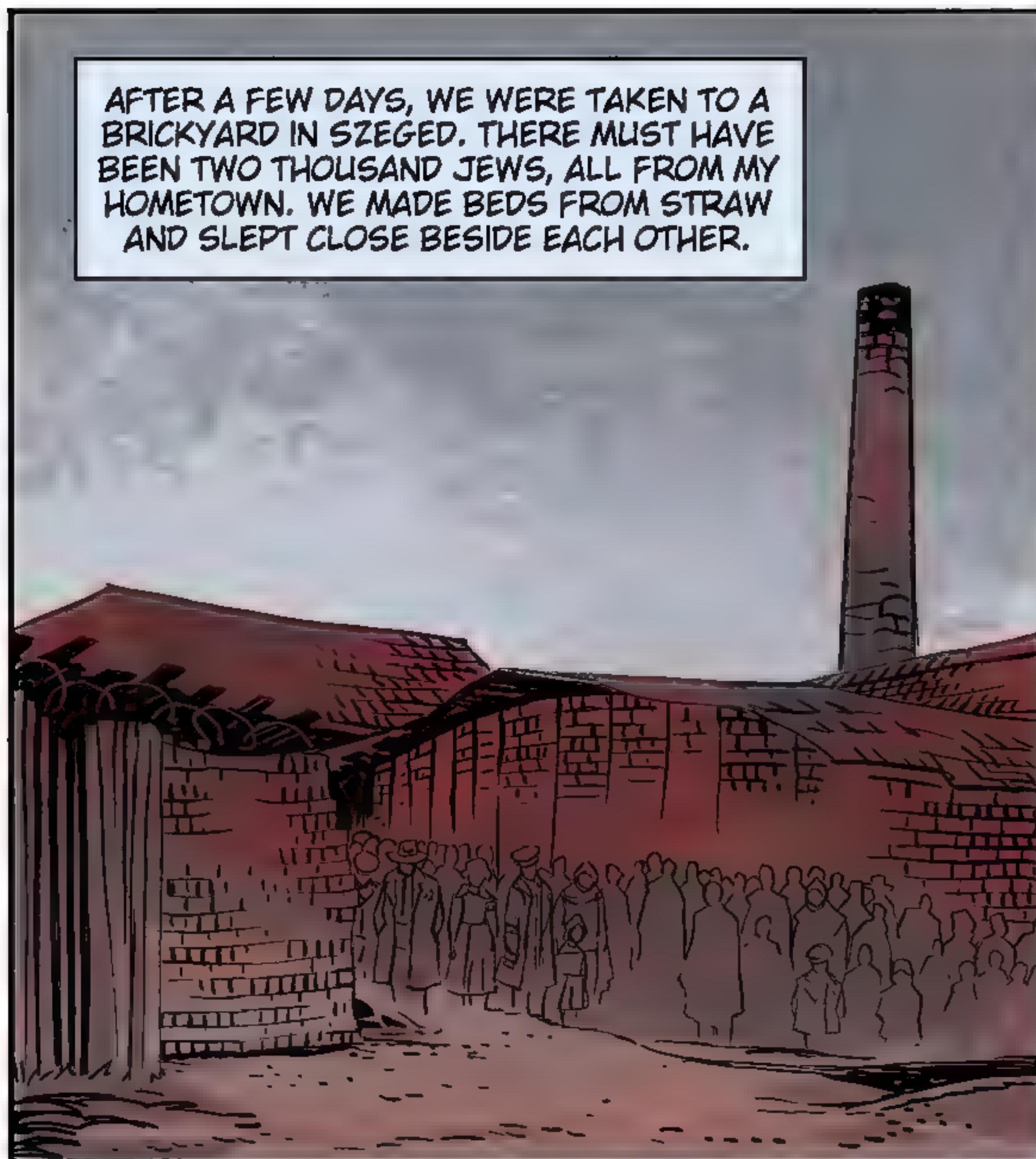


MY DAD WANTED US TO RENT A ROOM AT THE OLD FOLKS' HOME. THERE WAS ONE AVAILABLE THERE AND IT WOULD BE CHEAPER FOR US.

MY DAD, MUM, AND I WERE INVITED TO CELEBRATE PASSOVER AT THE DIRECTOR'S HOME. THAT MEANT A LOT TO ME. AT HOME, WE NEVER CELEBRATED THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS.

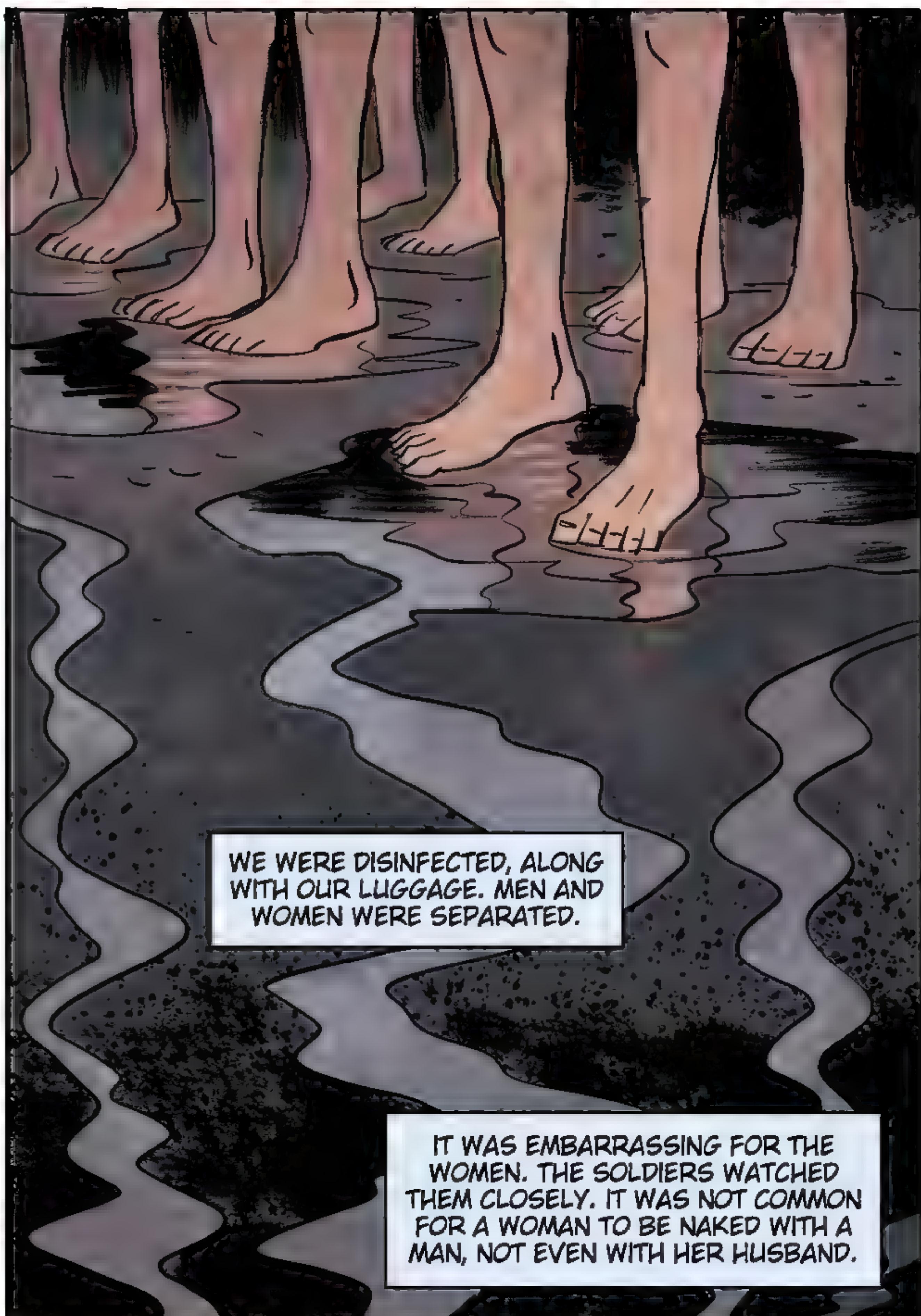




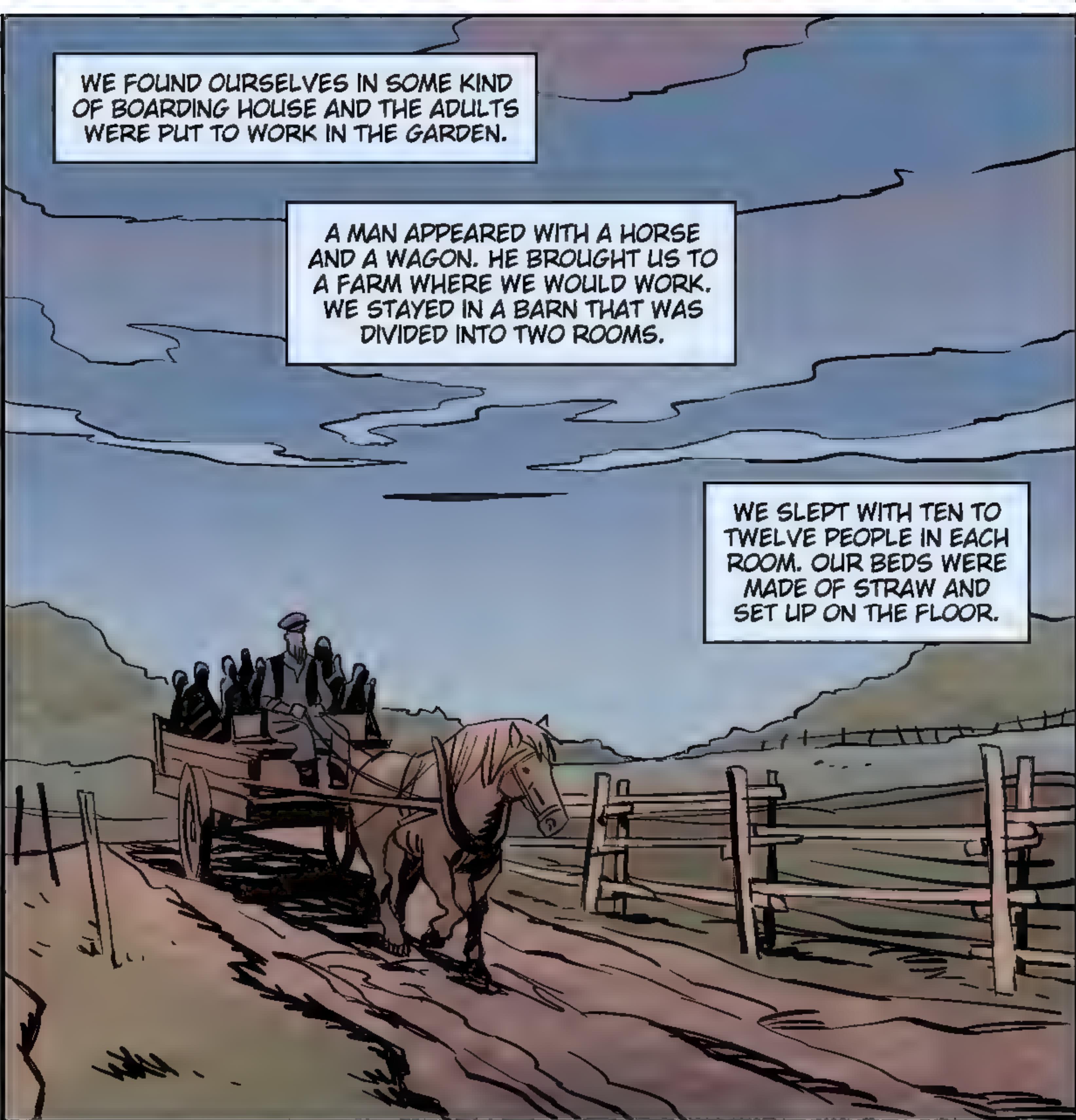




IT WAS DARK WHEN WE GOT THERE. PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. MANY LOST SIGHT OF EACH OTHER IN THE CROWD. THROUGH THE NIGHT YOU COULD HEAR PEOPLE SHOUTING EACH OTHER'S NAMES, LOOKING FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

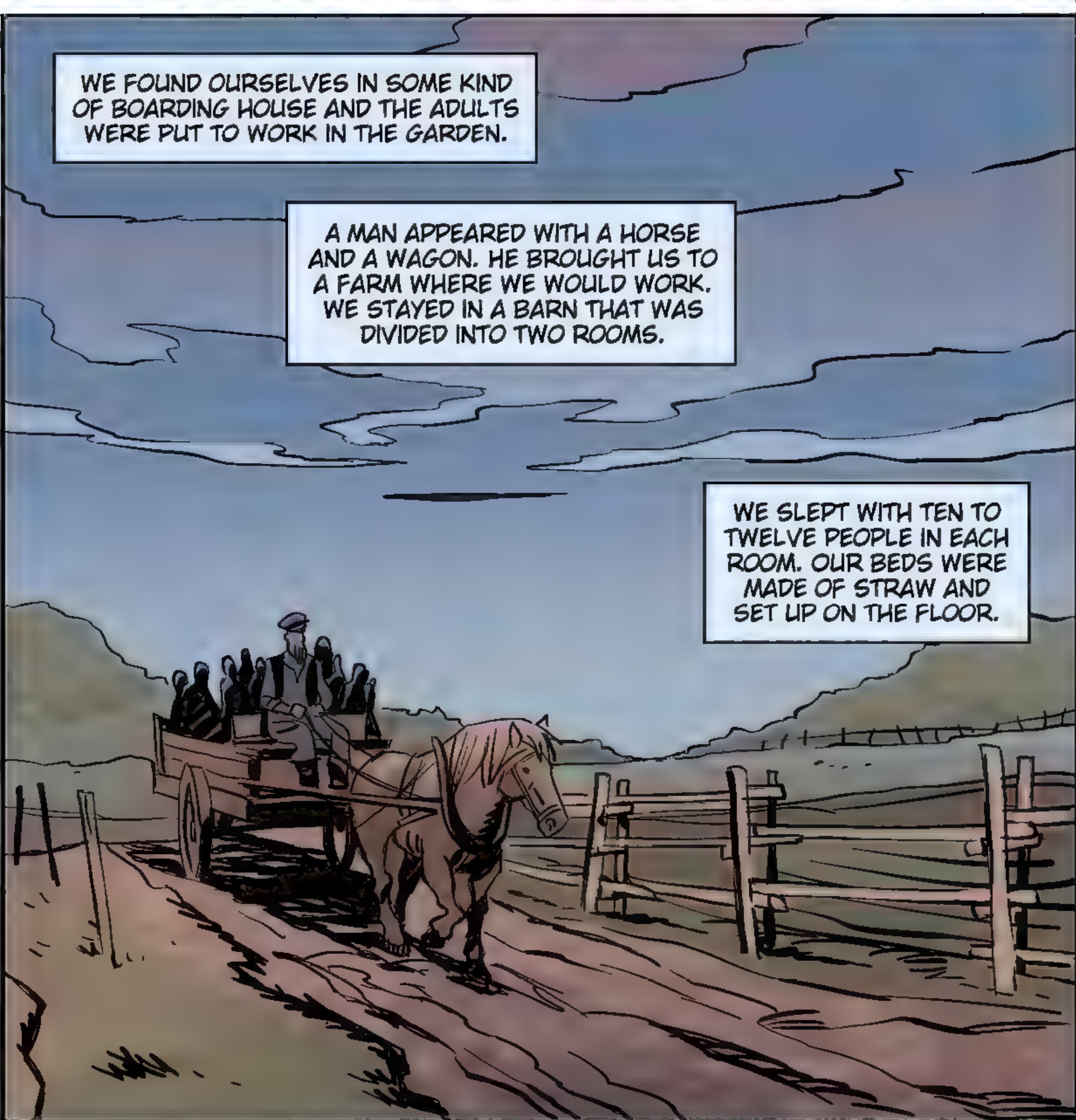


AFTER THEY SHOWERED US, THEY FORCED US INTO THE BARRACKS. ONE WEEK LATER WE WERE PUT ON A TRAIN AGAIN, TO BRUCK AN DER LEITHA IN AUSTRIA.

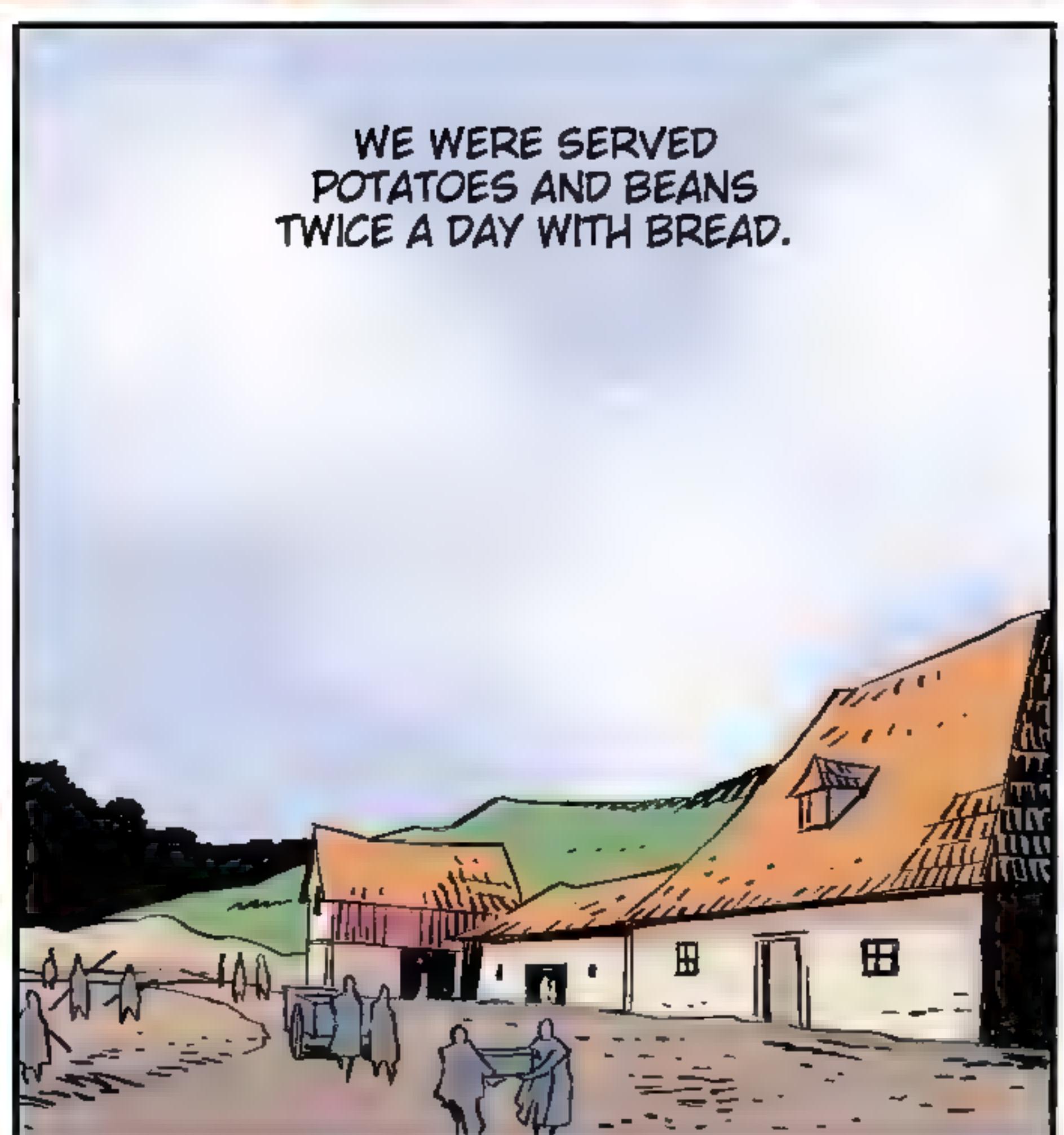
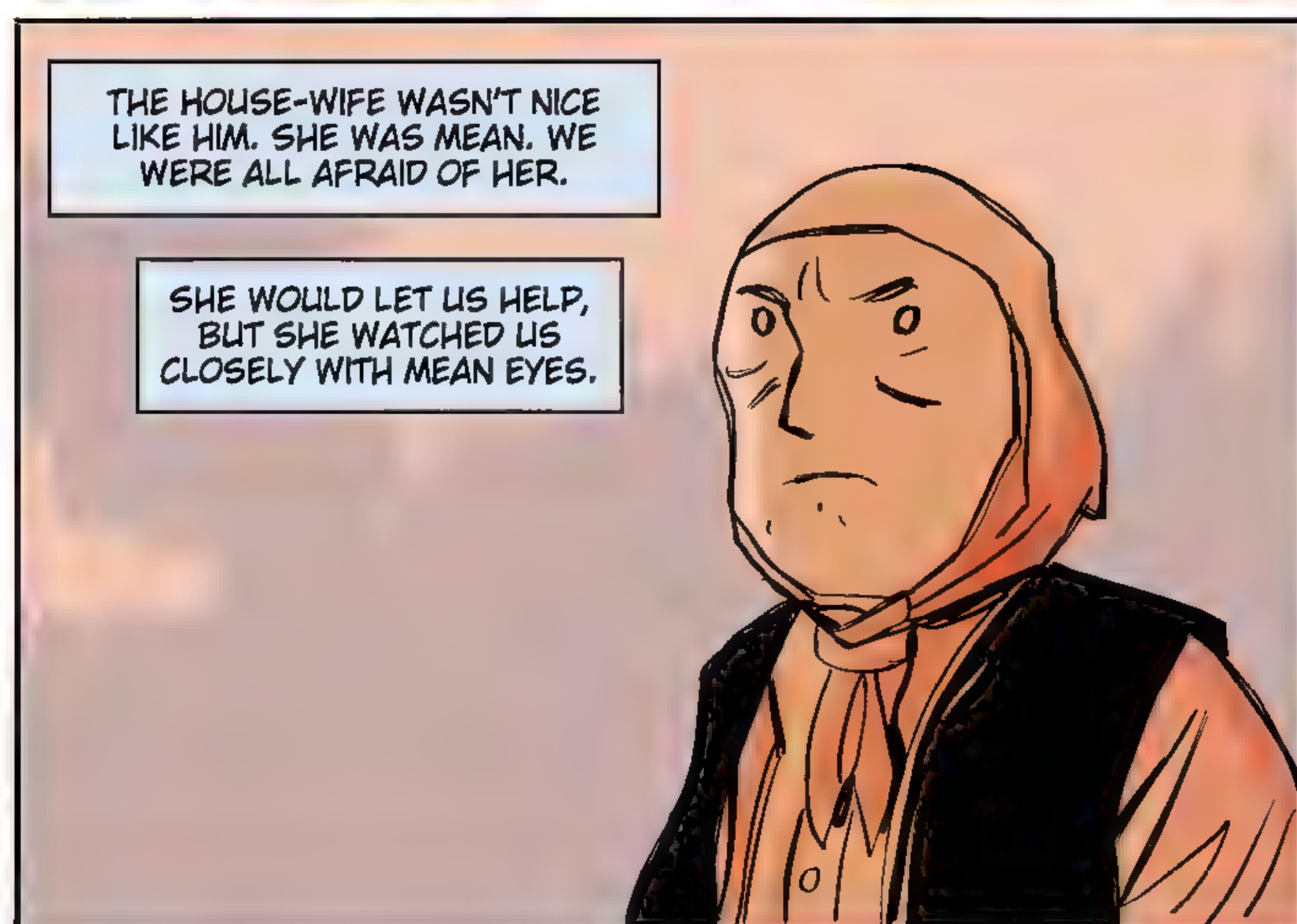
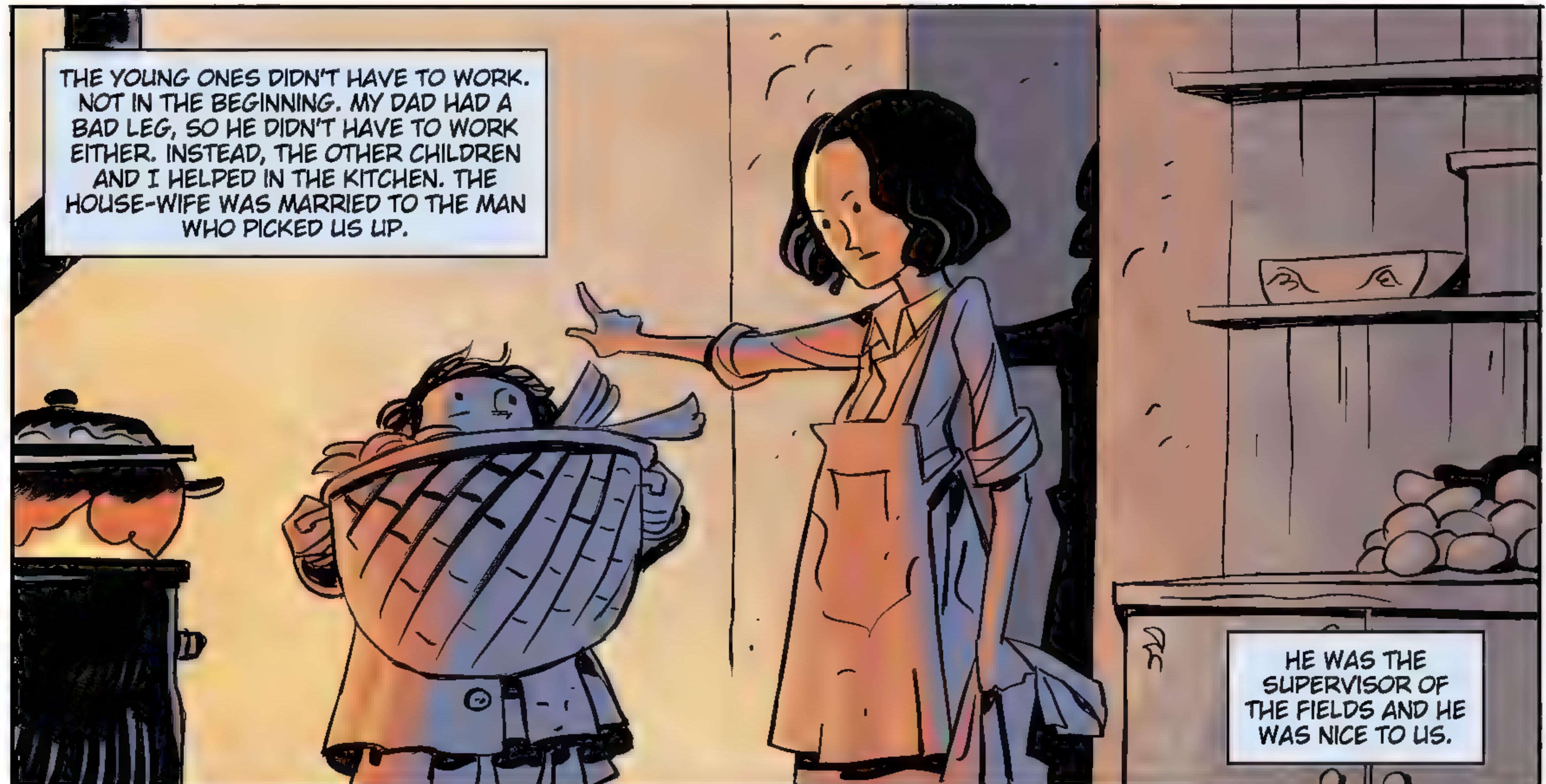


WE FOUND OURSELVES IN SOME KIND OF BOARDING HOUSE AND THE ADULTS WERE PUT TO WORK IN THE GARDEN.

A MAN APPEARED WITH A HORSE AND A WAGON. HE BROUGHT US TO A FARM WHERE WE WOULD WORK. WE STAYED IN A BARN THAT WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO ROOMS.



WE SLEPT WITH TEN TO TWELVE PEOPLE IN EACH ROOM. OUR BEDS WERE MADE OF STRAW AND SET UP ON THE FLOOR.

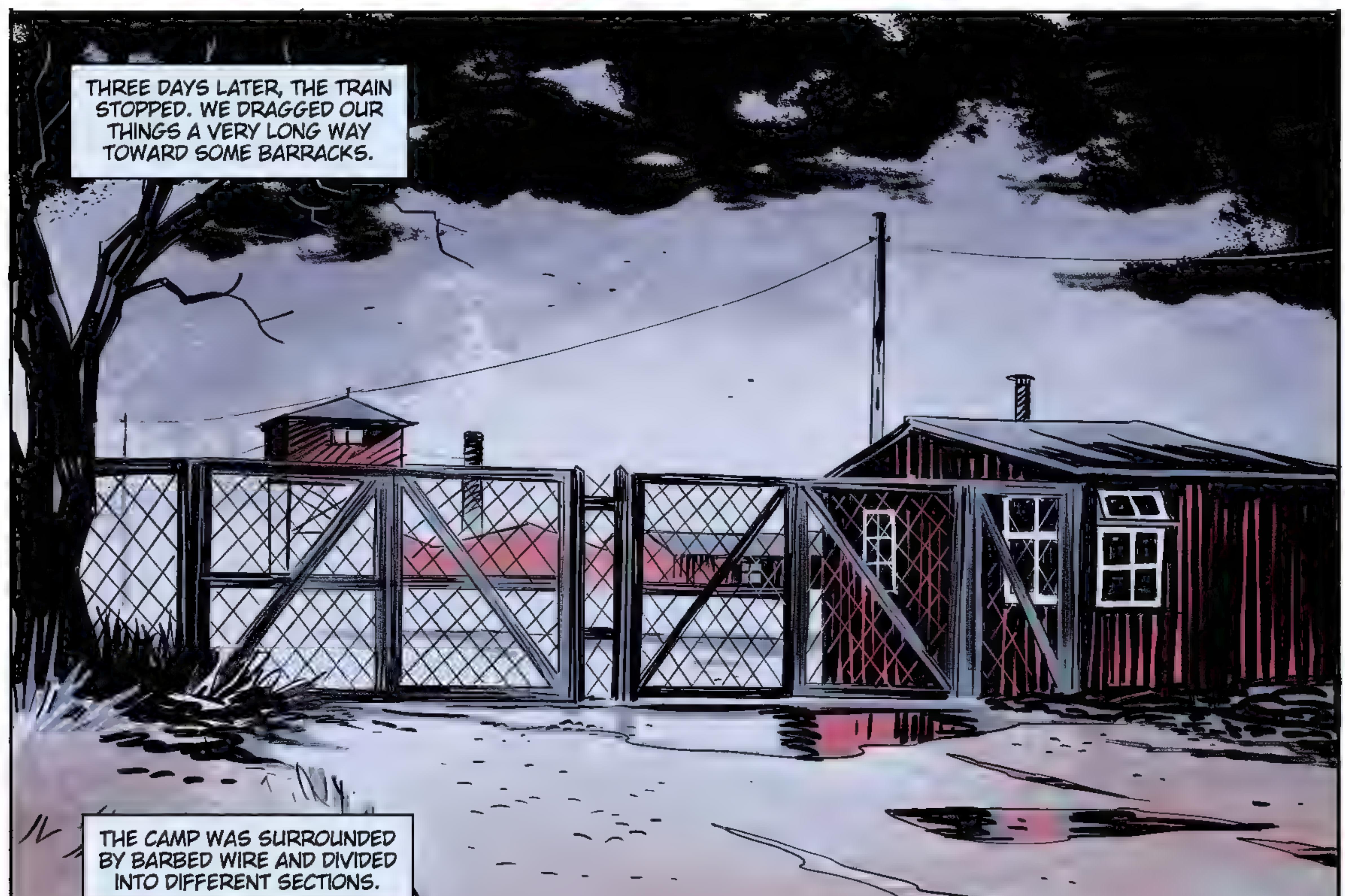




AT THE END OF NOVEMBER, THEY TOLD US TO PACK OUR THINGS.

THEY TOOK US BACK TO STRASSHOF. WE SPENT THE FIRST NIGHT OUTSIDE.

WE STAYED IN STRASSHOF FOR ABOUT A WEEK UNTIL THEY PUT US ON ANOTHER TRAIN.



THREE DAYS LATER, THE TRAIN STOPPED. WE DRAGGED OUR THINGS A VERY LONG WAY TOWARD SOME BARRACKS.

THE CAMP WAS SURROUNDED BY BARBED WIRE AND DIVIDED INTO DIFFERENT SECTIONS.



NONE OF US HAD EVER HEARD OF BERGEN-BELSEN UNTIL WE FOUND OURSELVES THERE.

MY FAMILY AND AROUND TWO THOUSAND OTHER PEOPLE CAME FROM SZEGED. WE WERE PLACED IN THE SAME GROUP.

OUR FAMILY OF THREE WAS ASSIGNED TWO BUNKS. SINCE MY DAD COULDN'T CLIMB, HE GOT HIS OWN BUNK AT THE BOTTOM.

73

FOR BREAKFAST THEY FED US SOME KIND OF STRANGE DRINK. A MIX BETWEEN SOUP AND STEW.

EVERY THIRD DAY WE HAD A THIN PIECE OF BREAD. IT WAS HEAVY AS CLAY.

MY MUM MADE SURE THAT WE SAVED THE BREAD FOR THE DAYS WHEN WE WOULDN'T HAVE IT. WE STILL STARVED. AND IT WAS HORRIBLE.

THE SECTIONS IN THE CAMP WERE DIVIDED BY A THICK WALL. WE USED TO STAND BY THE GATES AND LOOK OUT.

EVERY DAY WE SAW CARRIAGES LOADED WITH NAKED CORPSES. THE BODIES LOOKED LIKE SKELETONS.

THERE WERE ONLY FAMILIES IN OUR CAMP. IN SOME SECTIONS, WOMEN WERE KEPT SEPARATE FROM MEN.

GERMAN SOLDIERS WATCHED OVER THE CAMP FROM THEIR GUARD TOWER.

FROM THE TOWER THEY CONSTANTLY SHINED THEIR SEARCHLIGHT ON US.

THE SEARCHLIGHT FOLLOWED US BACK AND FORTH AT NIGHT WHEN WE USED THE TOILET.

THE DRY TOILET WAS A LARGE ROOM WITH A BENCH WHERE YOU SAT DOWN AND DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO.

BOTH MEN AND WOMEN USED THE SAME TOILET. LIFE WAS HORRIFYING IN BERGEN-BELSEN.

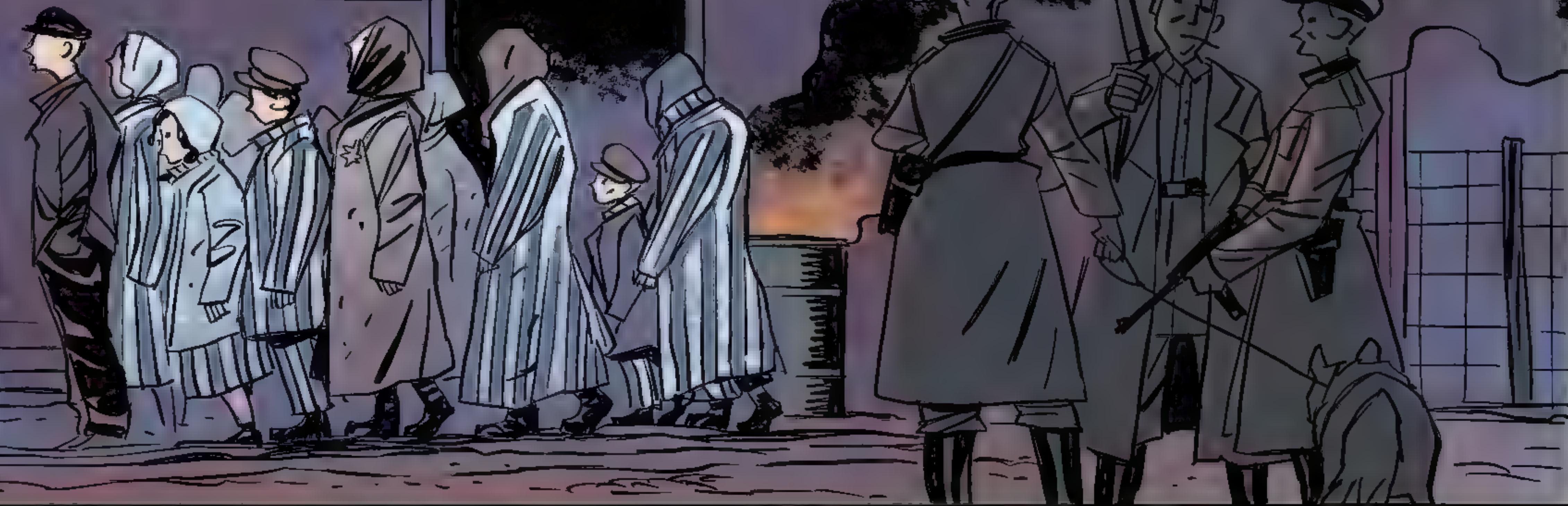
WE PRAYED AND BEGGED GOD THAT A BOMB WOULD JUST END IT ALL.

THAT'S HOW BAD THINGS WERE. WE BEGGED FOR DEATH. WE SAW NO LIGHT.

ALL OF A SUDDEN IN THE BEGINNING OF APRIL 1945, WE LEFT BERGEN-BELSEN.

WE HAD BEEN IN THE CAMP SINCE EARLY DECEMBER. WE WERE STARVING AND WEAK.

THOSE WHO COULD LEFT BY FOOT. BUT MY DAD WAS TOO WEAK TO WALK. ME AND MY MUM DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE HIM.



WE WATCHED EVERYONE GO ONE BY ONE.

TRUCKS CAME TO TAKE THE ONES STILL LEFT BEHIND. WE STRUGGLED, FRANTICALLY TRYING TO CATCH UP WITH EVERYONE.

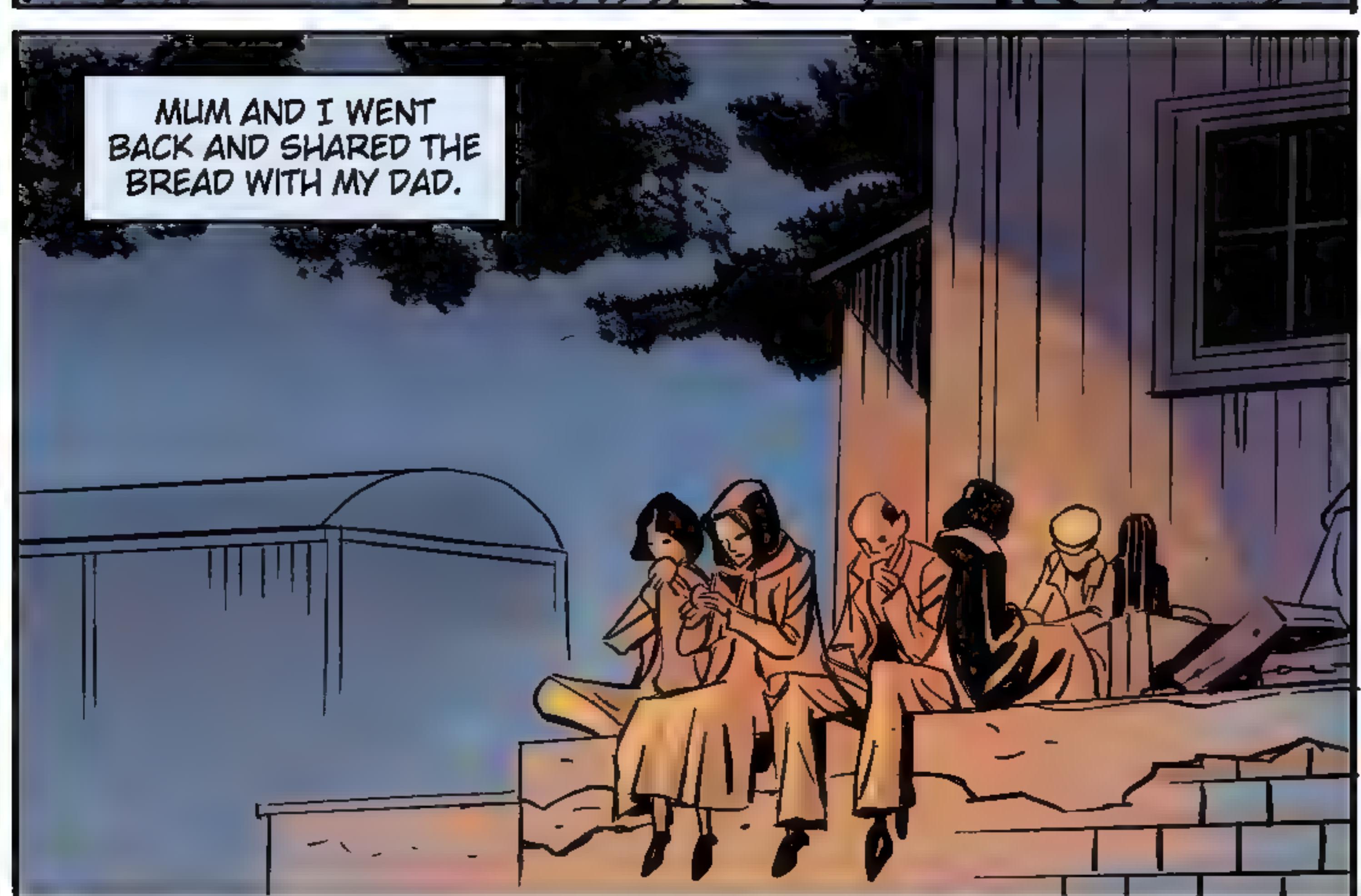
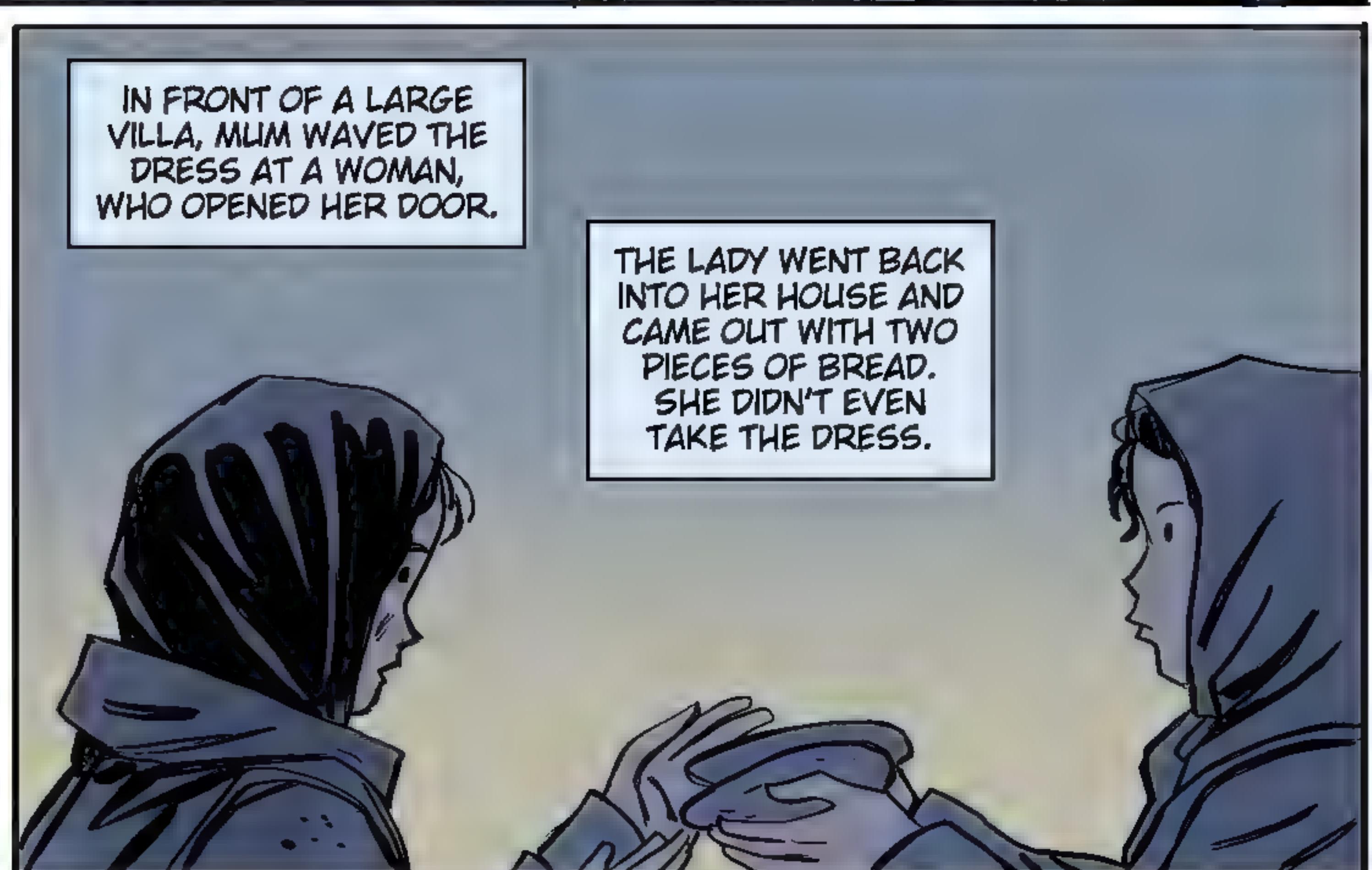
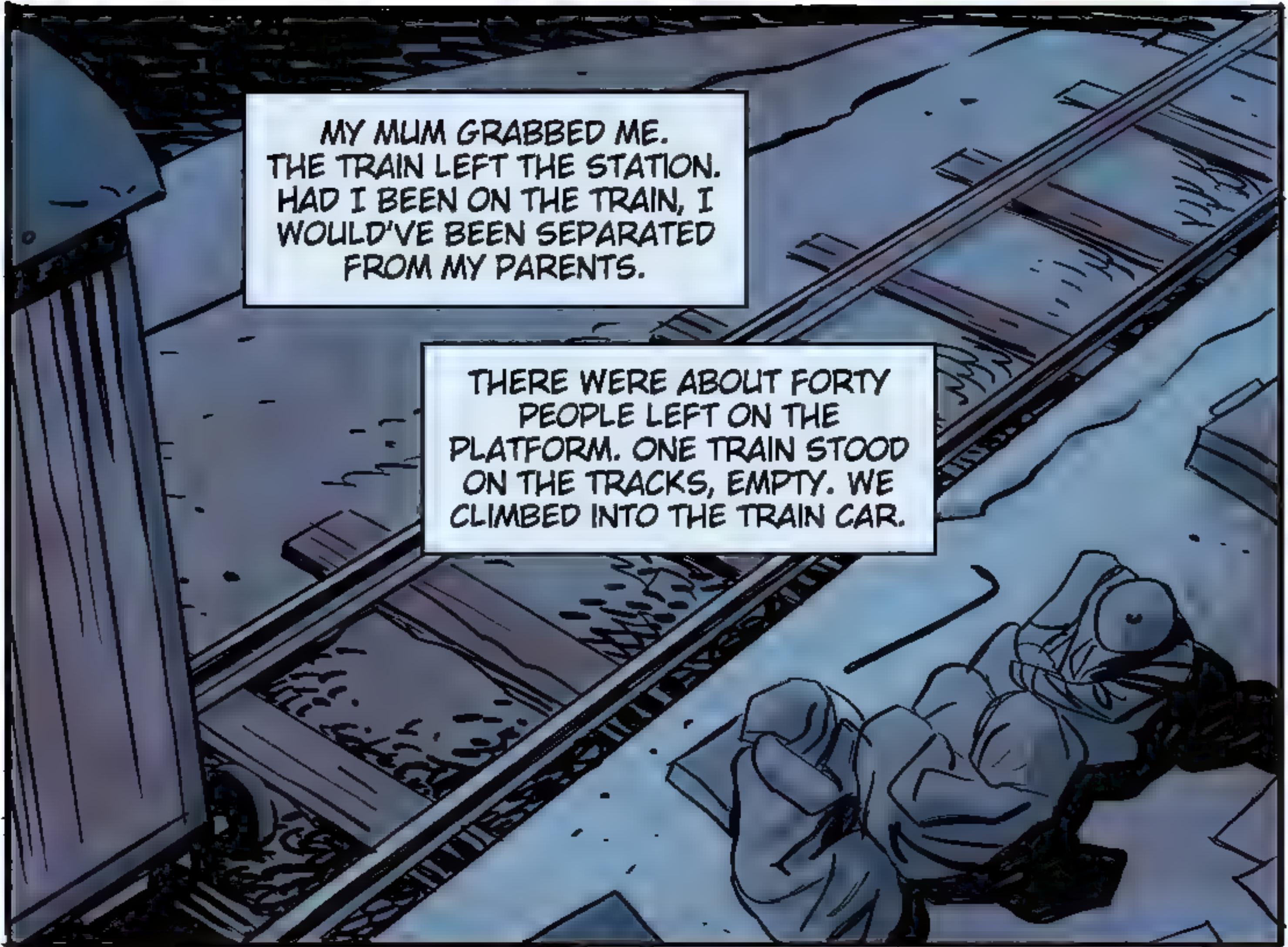
WE COULDN'T REACH THE OTHERS BECAUSE MY DAD WAS SO WEAK. OUR FAMILY FINALLY MADE IT ONTO THE LAST TRUCK THAT LEFT THE CAMP.

WE WERE TAKEN TO THE STATION WHERE A TRAIN STOOD WAITING.

THE TRAIN WAS ALREADY FULL WHEN WE ARRIVED. IT WAS SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT. THE TRAIN WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR SAVIOR.

SUDDENLY, A WOMAN SHOUTED.

WE HAVE ROOM FOR THE CHILD!



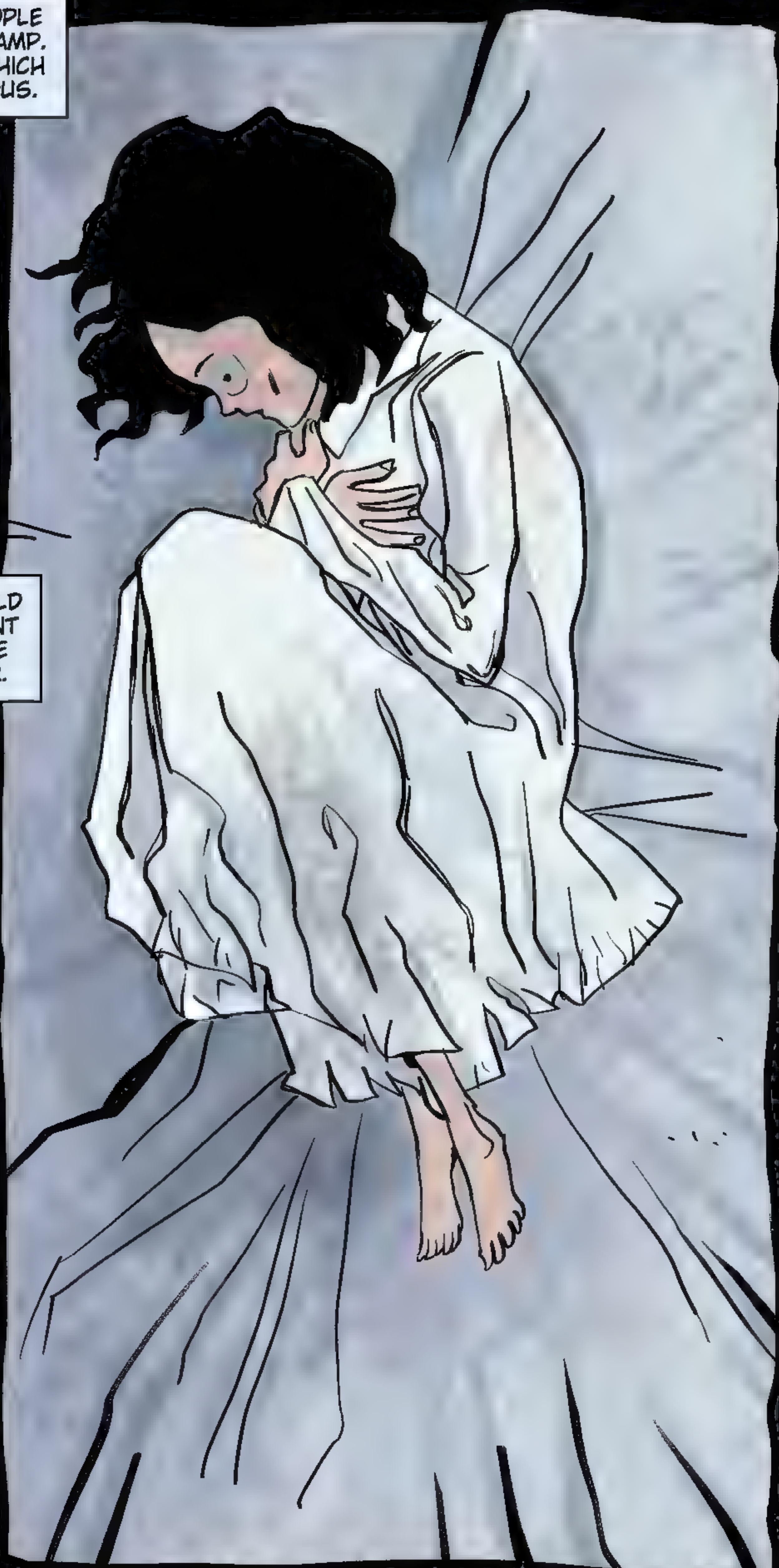


FINALLY, WE WERE TAKEN BACK TO BERGEN-BELSEN, THIS TIME TO A DIFFERENT SECTION. THIS WAS A CAMP FOR DUTCH JEWS.*

ONLY ABOUT TEN PEOPLE WERE LEFT IN THAT CAMP. THEY HAD TYPHUS, WHICH WAS VERY CONTAGIOUS.

THEY ALL LAID ON THEIR BLINKS.

AS LONG AS MY MUM COULD STAND UPRIGHT, SHE WENT AROUND HELPING PEOPLE AND GIVING THEM WATER.



TOWARD THE END, JUST BEFORE THE LIBERATION, MY MUM WAS ALSO WEAK AND ILL.

* SUSANNA LATER LEARNED THAT SHE WAS IN BERGEN-BELSEN AT THE SAME TIME THAT ANNE FRANK WAS. BERGEN-BELSEN WAS THE CAMP WHERE ANNE FRANK DIED.

ON APRIL 15,
BERGEN-BELSEN
WAS LIBERATED.

TWO DAYS LATER
MY DAD DIED.

HE LEFT SOME THINGS IN
A PAPER BAG THAT HE
HAD KEPT FROM HOME.

IN THE BAG WERE HIS
GLASSES, A PENCIL,
AND HIS DIARY.

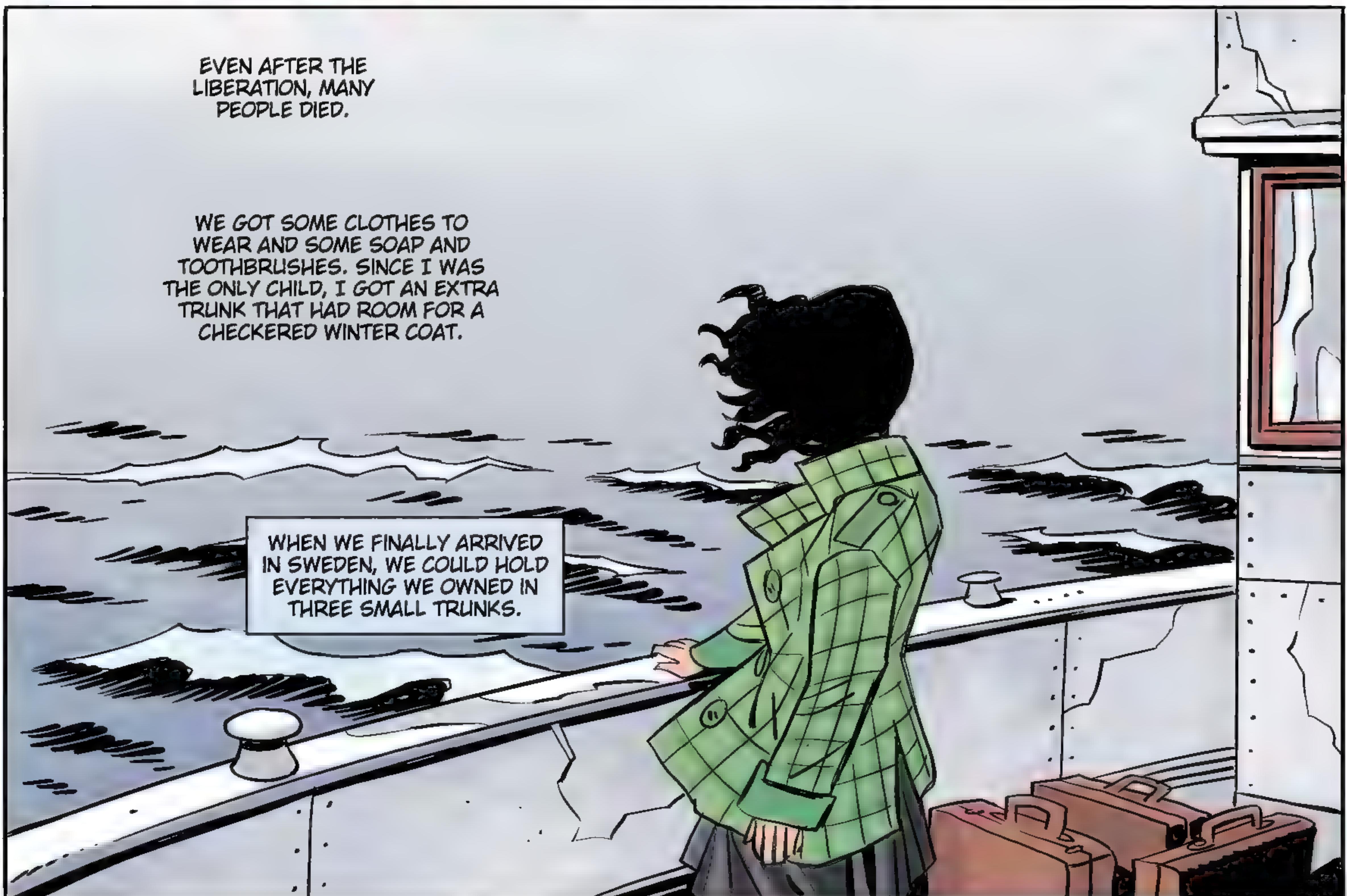
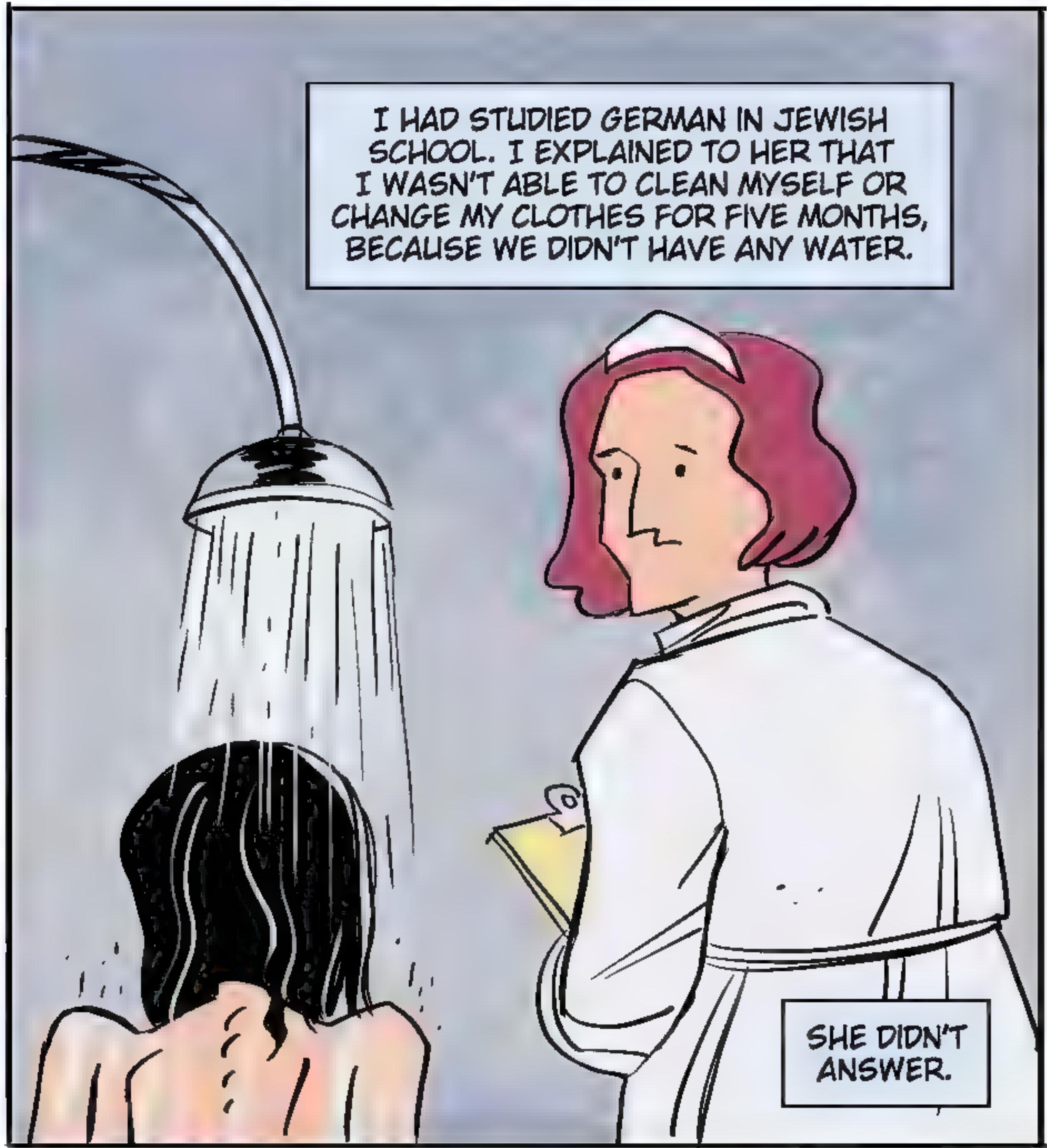
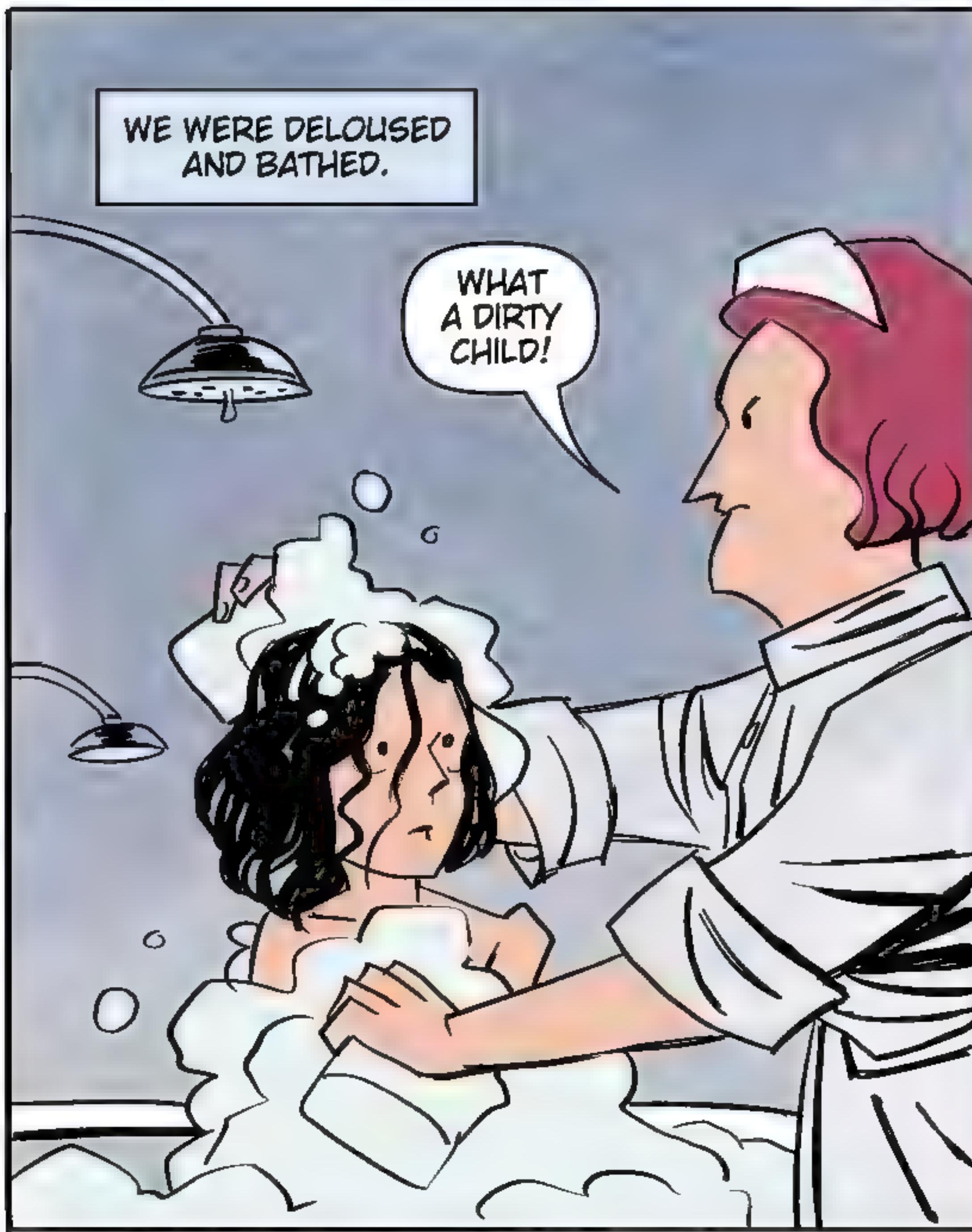
LATER I STARTED
WRITING WHERE
HE HAD STOPPED.



MY MUM DIED A LITTLE OVER
A WEEK AFTER DAD DID. SHE
COULD HARDLY LIFT HER HEAD.
A FEW DAYS LATER EVEN I
WAS BOUND TO MY BUNK.

NAKED AND SWADDLED IN
BLANKETS, WE WERE CARRIED
OUT OF THE BARRACKS AND
INTO MILITARY AMBULANCES.

BUT THROUGH IT ALL I KEPT
THE BAG WITH THE THINGS
MY DAD HAD LEFT BEHIND.



MY DAD'S JOURNAL IS KEPT
IN THE BERGEN-BELSEN
ARCHIVES. THEY ALSO HAVE
HIS GLASSES AT THE MUSEUM.





Susanna Christensen was one of the first survivors to travel around to schools telling the story of her experiences during the Holocaust. Wherever she goes, everyone listens carefully, and she's met with great appreciation. She believes it's important for young people today to meet those who experienced the war—especially today, when she feels that the hatred of Jews is increasing again. She is not afraid for her own sake anymore, but hopes that her descendants never have to experience any of the things that she did.

Emerich

I HAVE EXPERIENCED THE UTMOST CONSEQUENCES OF HATRED AND VIOLENCE.

I'VE BEEN A PRISONER IN FIVE CONCENTRATION CAMPS. NOT A SINGLE HUMAN BEING SHOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH OR SEE THE THINGS THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED.

I WAS BORN IN WHAT WAS THEN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. TODAY IT'S CALLED VINOGRADOV, AND IT'S A PART OF UKRAINE.

I HAD A BIG FAMILY. MUM AND DAD, FOUR YOUNGER SISTERS, A GRANDMOTHER, SIX UNCLES, AND TWENTY-FOUR COUSINS.

AFTER OUR PART OF THE COUNTRY BECAME PART OF HUNGARY, OUR LIVES BECAME MUCH HARDER. THE ANTISEMITISM IN HUNGARY HAD BEEN A PART OF THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. SUDDENLY, IT WAS A PART OF OUR LIVES TOO.

WE HOPED THAT THIS BAD DREAM WOULD END. BUT THINGS WOULD GET WORSE. MUCH WORSE.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.

WE SAW GERMAN SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS. THEY KEPT THEIR DOGS READY TO JUMP ON US AT ANY MOMENT.

THEY MADE US FORM TWO LINES, ONE FOR MEN AND ONE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THEY TOLD US TO MOVE FORWARD SLOWLY.

AHEAD OF US, AN ELEGANT MAN STOOD ON A KIND OF STAGE. HE WAS AN OFFICER. HE DIDN'T SAY A WORD. HE JUST POINTED TO THE RIGHT OR LEFT. AS WE CAME CLOSER WE SAW HIS BLUE, ICE COLD EYES, STARING AT US.

LATER WE FOUND OUT THAT THE MAN DECIDING WHO LIVED AND WHO DIED WAS DR. JOSEF MENGELE. ELDERLY PEOPLE, PREGNANT WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND SICK PEOPLE, TO THE LEFT.

THOSE IN GOOD CONDITION, TO THE RIGHT. MY DAD HAD BEEN WOUNDED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, SO HE HAD A LIMP. I SQUEEZED HIS ARM HARD AND TRIED TO HOLD HIM UP SO THEY WOULDN'T NOTICE. WE GOT AWAY WITH IT AND ENDED UP ON THE RIGHT SIDE TOGETHER. MY MOTHER AND SIBLINGS WERE IN THE OTHER LINE.



WE COULD SEE A HIGH CHIMNEY.

AFTER AROUND FOUR WEEKS
WE MOVED TO A SMALLER
WORKING CAMP. OUR JOB
WAS TO BREAK ROCKS.

MY DAD AND I USED
SLEDGEHAMMERS. WE
CARRIED THE SPLIT
STONES WITH OUR BARE
HANDS TO THE CARRIAGES.

THE STONES WERE USED FOR
ROAD CONSTRUCTION. IT WAS
HEAVY WORK AND ACCIDENTS
HAPPENED ALL THE TIME.

WE HAD SO LITTLE FOOD,
MANY DIED OF STARVATION.
THEY USED HUNGER TO
CONTROL THE PRISONERS.

WE WERE TIRED, WEAK,
AND HAD NOTHING
LEFT IN US TO RESIST.

OUR CAMP
COMMANDER'S
NAME WAS WULF.

HE'D CALL US SWINE
AND DOGS, AND HIT US
WITH HIS WOODEN CLUB.

HE SHOWERED US WITH HATRED.
SOMETIMES, HE'D PUT SOMEONE
OUTSIDE ALL NIGHT AND MAKE
THEM STAND IN A BARREL FULL
OF ICE-COLD WATER.

ALL THE WHILE, HE'D LOVE AND
ADORE HIS GERMAN SHEPHERD.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE WAR ENDED THE GERMANS STILL BELIEVED THEY WERE WINNING. RATHER THAN LEAVING US IN THE CAMP, THEY FORCED US TO FLEE WITH THEM.

THERE WAS A RUMOR THAT ANYONE LEFT BEHIND WOULD EITHER BE TAKEN TO ANOTHER CAMP OR SHOT.

MY DAD WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LEFT BEHIND, BUT I TOOK HIM BY THE HAND AND DRAGGED HIM OUT...

NOBODY NOTICED. "AS LONG AS I LIVE," I TOLD HIM, "WE'LL BE TOGETHER." DAD GOT WEAKER AND WEAKER.

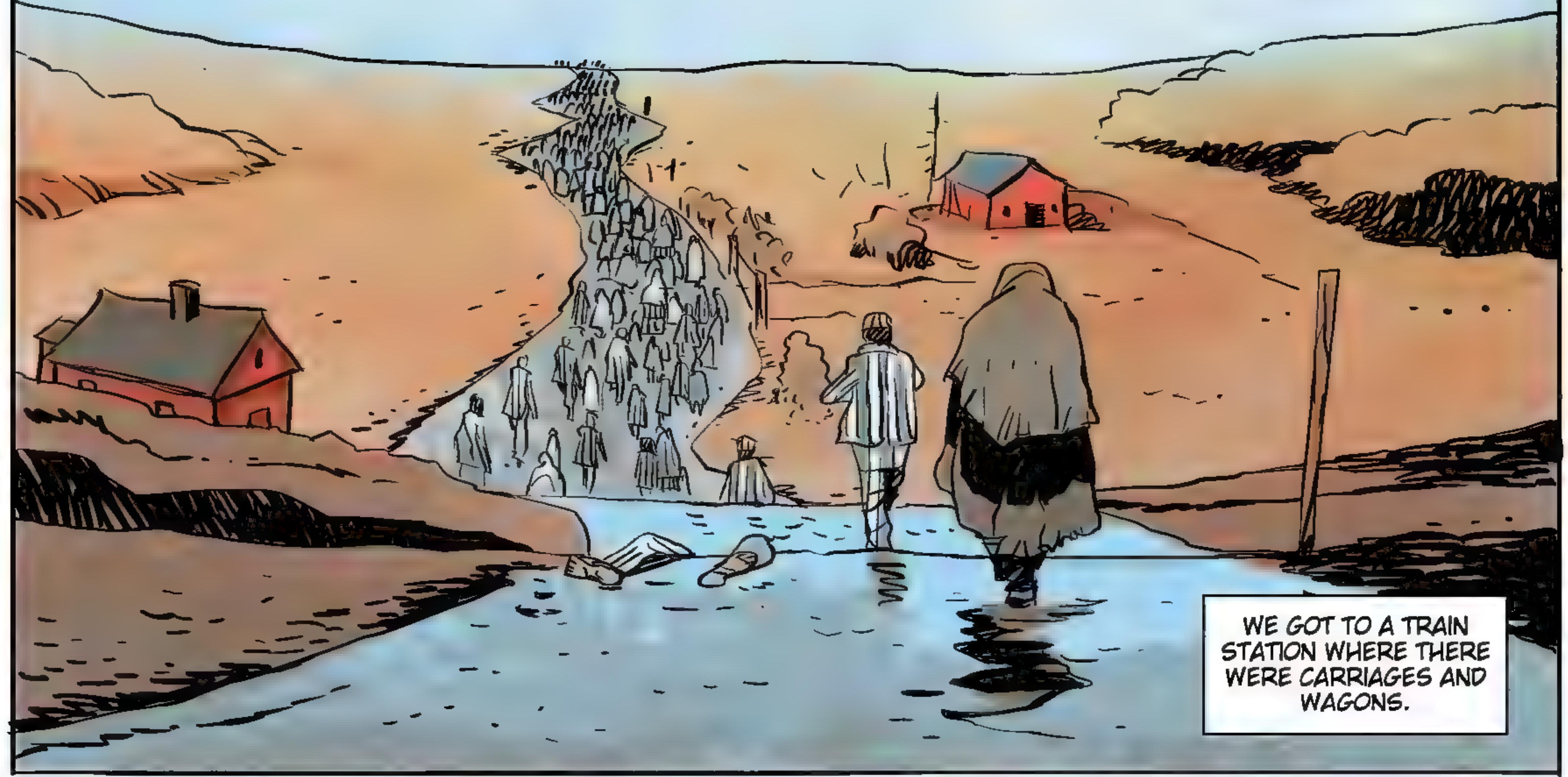
I HELD HIM CLOSE UNDER HIS ARM AS WE KEPT MARCHING WITH THE CROWD.

A SOLDIER APPROACHED US AND SAID THAT A HORSE AND CARRIAGE WAS IN THE BACK TO HOLD THE WEAK PEOPLE.

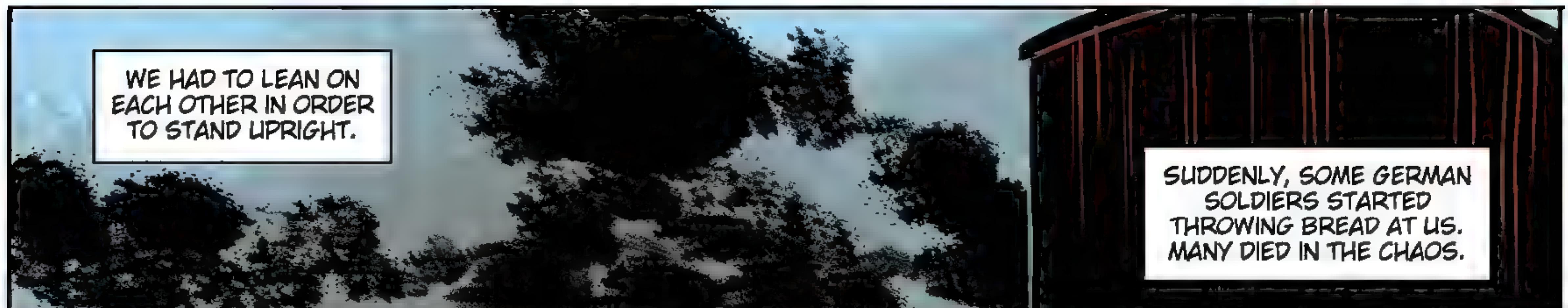
MY DAD WAS SO EXHAUSTED HE IMMEDIATELY SAID YES.

THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM.

LATER I FOUND OUT THAT WE WERE AMONG ABOUT THIRTY THOUSAND PRISONERS MARCHING. IN HISTORY BOOKS IT'S OFTEN CALLED THE MARCH OF DEATH. THERE WERE ONLY A FEW THOUSAND SURVIVORS OUT OF ALL OF US PRISONERS.



WE GOT TO A TRAIN STATION WHERE THERE WERE CARRIAGES AND WAGONS.

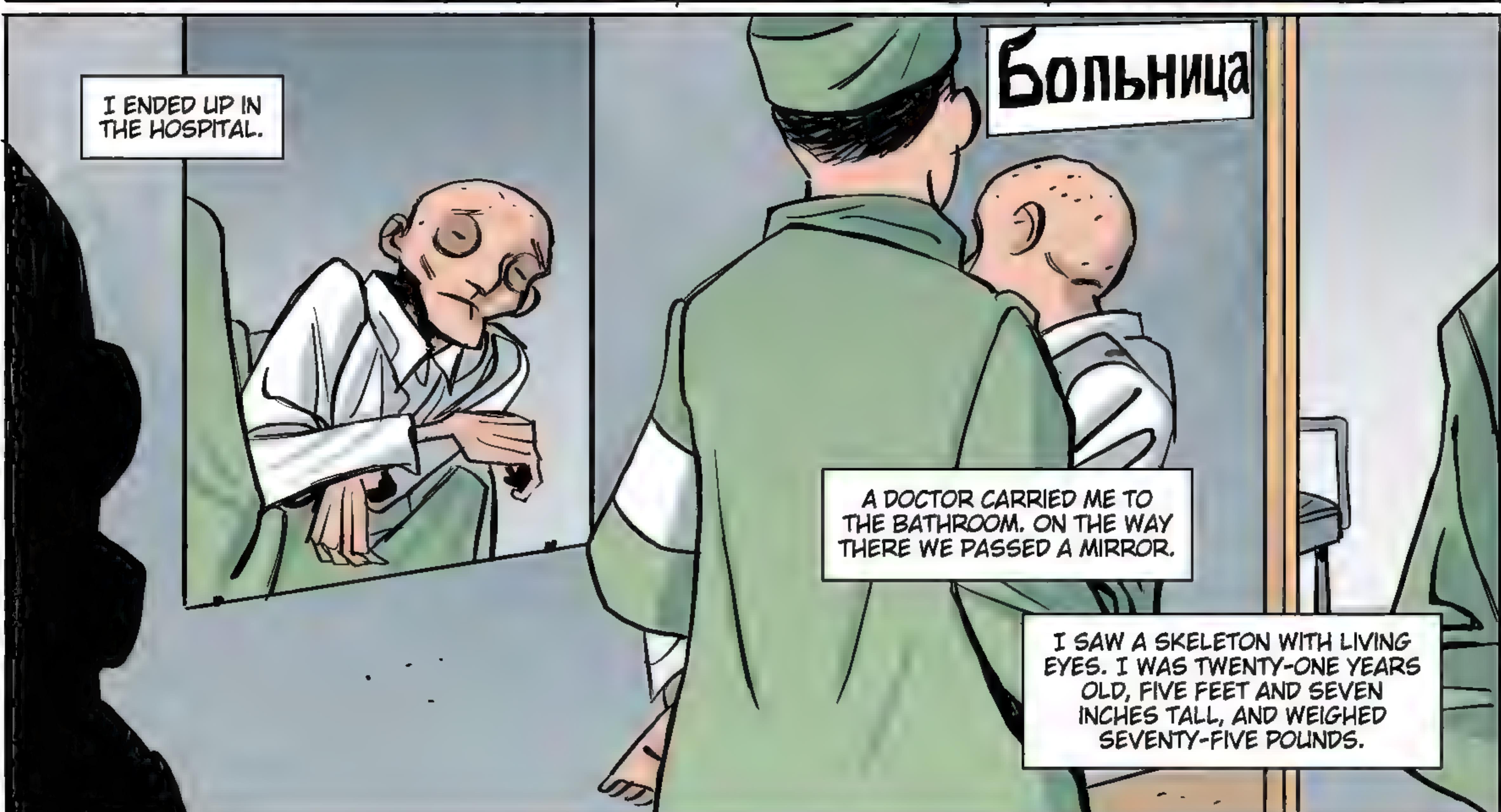
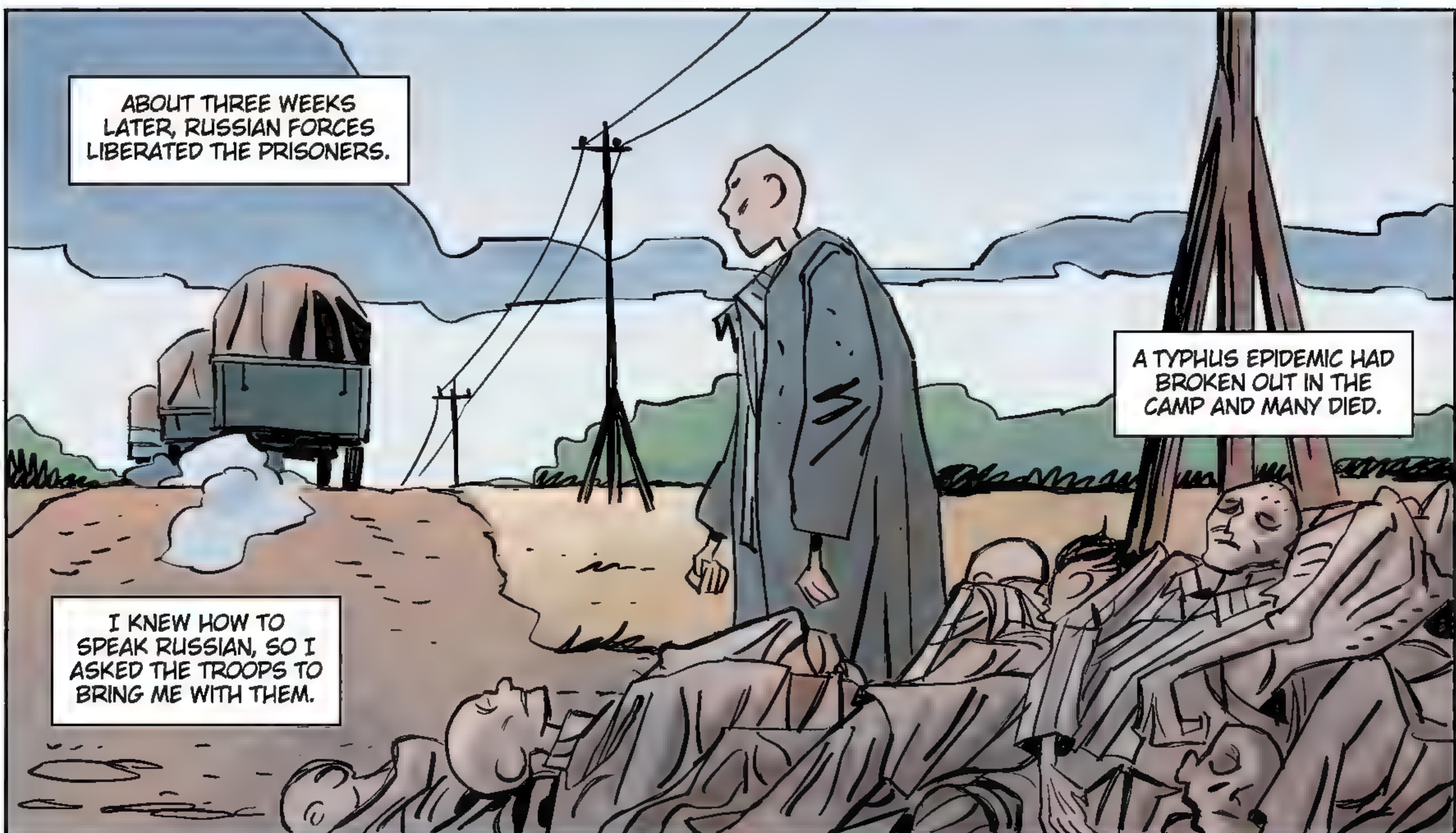


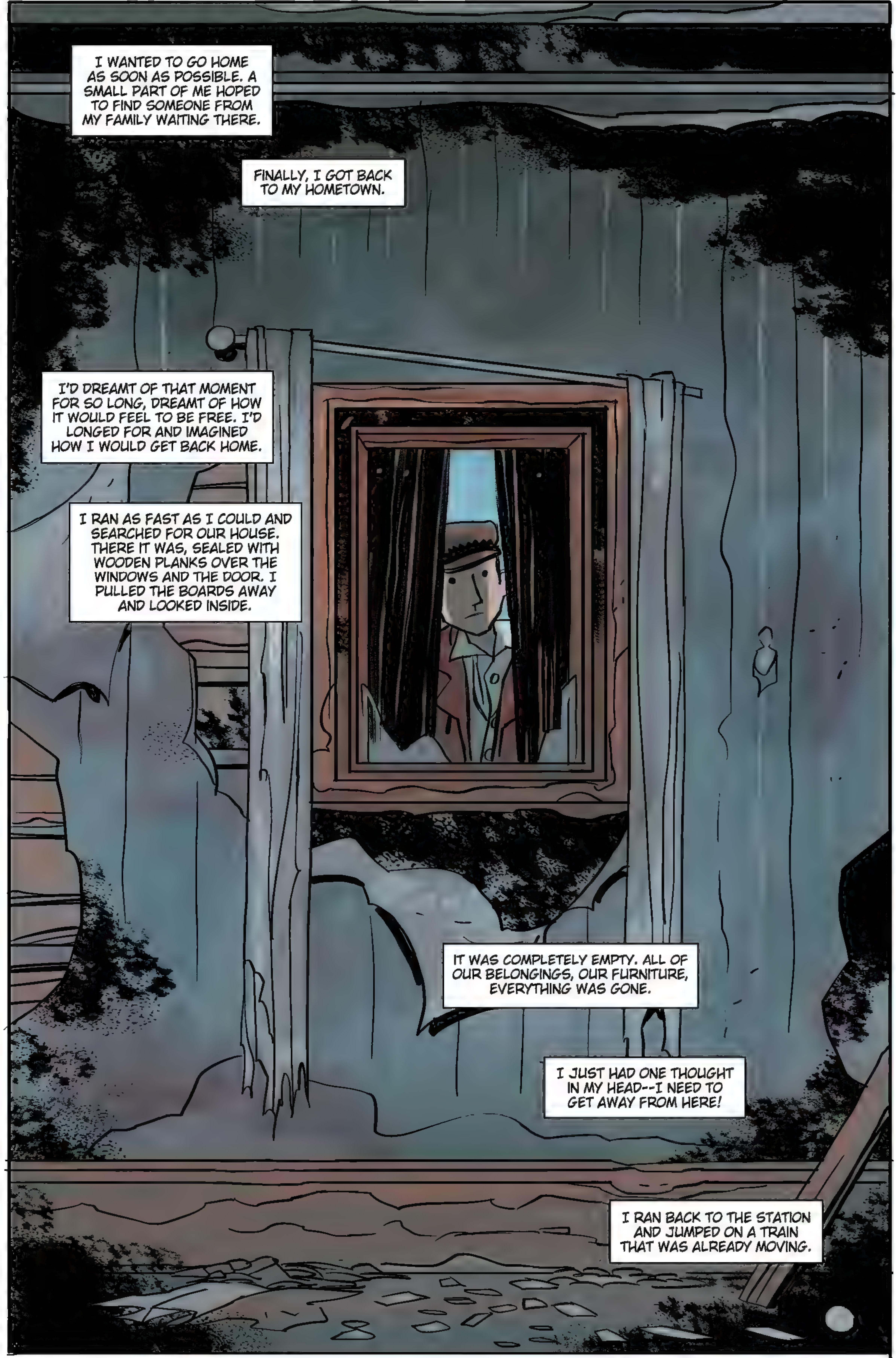
WE HAD TO LEAN ON EACH OTHER IN ORDER TO STAND UPRIGHT.

SUDDENLY, SOME GERMAN SOLDIERS STARTED THROWING BREAD AT US. MANY DIED IN THE CHAOS.



WE ARRIVED IN BUCHENWALD, A NOTORIOUS CONCENTRATION CAMP WHERE EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR THE END TO COME.





I WANTED TO GO HOME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. A SMALL PART OF ME HOPED TO FIND SOMEONE FROM MY FAMILY WAITING THERE.

FINALLY, I GOT BACK TO MY HOMETOWN.

I'D DREAMT OF THAT MOMENT FOR SO LONG, DREAMT OF HOW IT WOULD FEEL TO BE FREE. I'D LONGED FOR AND IMAGINED HOW I WOULD GET BACK HOME.

I RAN AS FAST AS I COULD AND SEARCHED FOR OUR HOUSE. THERE IT WAS, SEALED WITH WOODEN PLANKS OVER THE WINDOWS AND THE DOOR. I PULLED THE BOARDS AWAY AND LOOKED INSIDE.

IT WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY. ALL OF OUR BELONGINGS, OUR FURNITURE, EVERYTHING WAS GONE.

I JUST HAD ONE THOUGHT IN MY HEAD--I NEED TO GET AWAY FROM HERE!

I RAN BACK TO THE STATION AND JUMPED ON A TRAIN THAT WAS ALREADY MOVING.

I DIDN'T CARE WHERE
THE TRAIN WAS GOING.
I TRAVELED FOR WEEKS
THROUGH A BROKEN EUROPE.

I PASSED THROUGH HUNGARY AND
AUSTRIA UNTIL I REACHED A LITTLE
TOWN IN THE SOUTH OF ITALY. I
FOUND A GROUP OF JEWISH KIDS
WHO HAD LIVED THROUGH SIMILAR
HORRORS AS ME.

WE DECIDED TO GO TO
PALESTINE. A FEW DAYS
BEFORE WE LEFT, I GOT SICK.
I'D CALLED TUBERCULOSIS
AND ENDED UP IN HOSPITAL.

THE SPARK OF LIFE IN ME
HAD DISAPPEARED. NOTHING
MATTERED. THEN SOMETHING
HAPPENED THAT CHANGED
EVERYTHING.

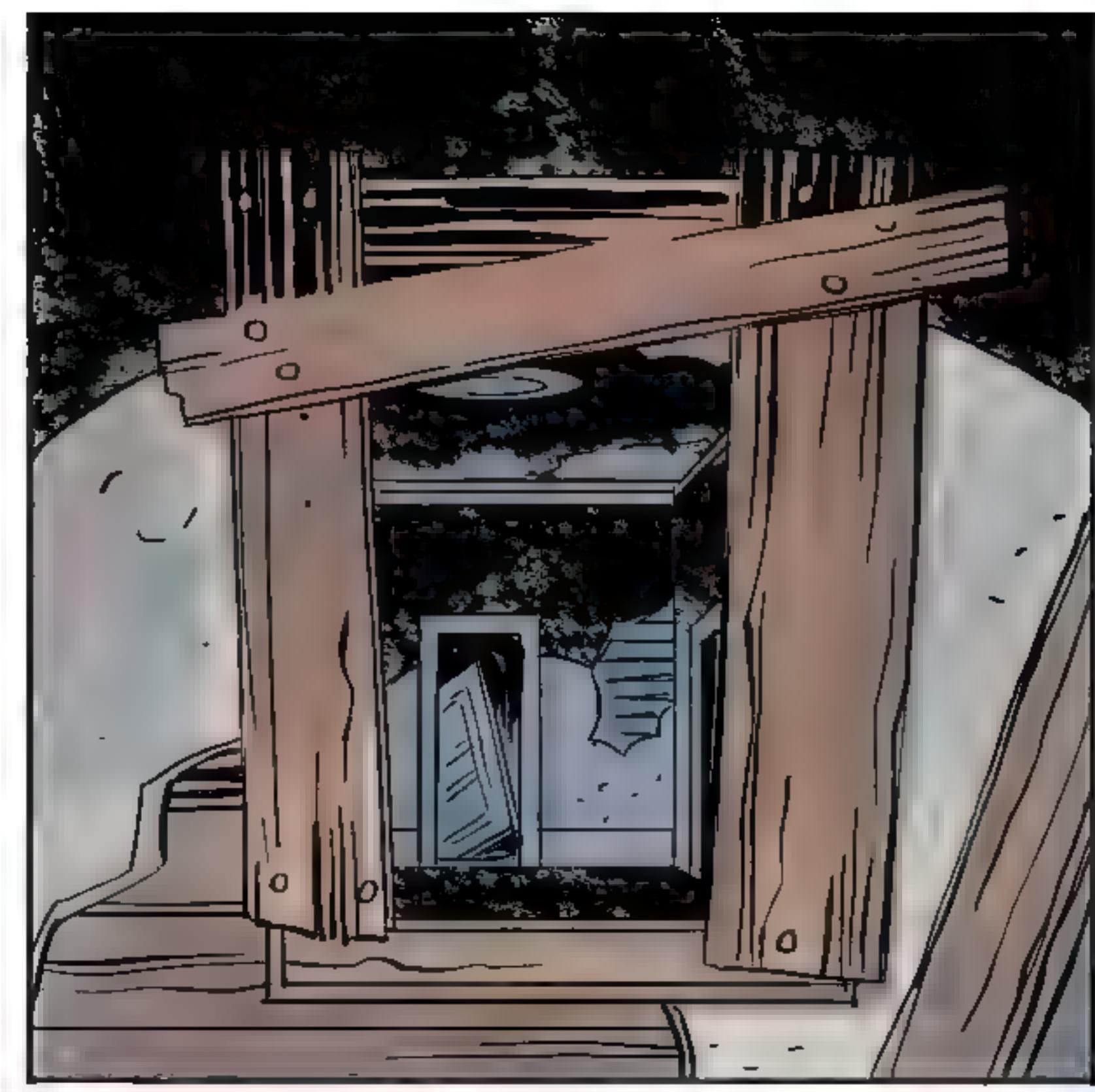
A FRIEND FROM THE GROUP CAME
RUNNING INTO THE HOSPITAL WITH
A PIECE OF PAPER IN HIS HAND.

THE LETTER WAS FROM MY COUSIN
WHO'D MOVED TO PALESTINE
BEFORE THE WAR. HE WROTE TO
TELL ME THAT ONE OF MY SISTERS
WAS ALIVE IN SWEDEN. IT WAS
SUCH AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE,
SO SHOCKING AND BEAUTIFUL. I
GOT THAT SPARK OF LIFE BACK.

SOON MY SISTER CAME TO
SEE ME IN ITALY. SHE'D
BEEN WITH OUR SISTER
EDITH IN THE CAMP.

BUT EDITH HAD GOTTEN SICK
AND DIED A FEW WEEKS
BEFORE THE LIBERATION.

THE NAZIS COULD NEVER TAKE
THE LOVE THAT I'D EXPERIENCED
AS A CHILD AWAY FROM ME.





Emerich Roth arrived in Sweden in 1950, first and foremost to be with his sister Elisabeth. He studied and became a social worker and therapist. He has worked at prisons and as operating chief at a rehabilitation center for abused youth. He wanted to use his experience to help others. Emerich believes that knowledge of the Holocaust can teach us about the future. A generation without historical education will be defenseless in preventing history repeating itself.

Elisabeth

MY MOM DIDN'T HAVE MUCH FREE TIME. SHE WAS FULLY PREOCCUPIED WITH ME AND MY FOUR SIBLINGS AND TAKING CARE OF OUR HOME.

SOMETIMES I WOULD TRAVEL TO MY DAD'S COUSIN ILONA'S HOME. I HELPED HER TAKE CARE OF HER LITTLE BOY TOMIK. I LOVED HIM SO MUCH.

WE LIVED IN TERRACED HOUSES WITH MOSTLY JEWISH NEIGHBORS. WE WOULD LISTEN TO OUR NEIGHBORS' RADIOS IN THE COURTYARD.

THAT'S HOW WE HEARD THE NEWS. I REMEMBER SENSING THAT SOMETHING WAS VERY WRONG.

THEY ANNOUNCED THAT ALL JEWS HAD TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES AND MOVE TO ANOTHER STREET WHERE MOST JEWS ALREADY LIVED.



WE DIDN'T KNOW YET THAT THE SAME THING HAD BEEN HAPPENING IN CITIES ALL OVER OUR COUNTRY. WE MOVED TO THE GHETTO IN 1944.



COMPLETELY SILENT.



THERE WERE SO MANY
OF US WHEN WE GOT
TO AUSCHWITZ.



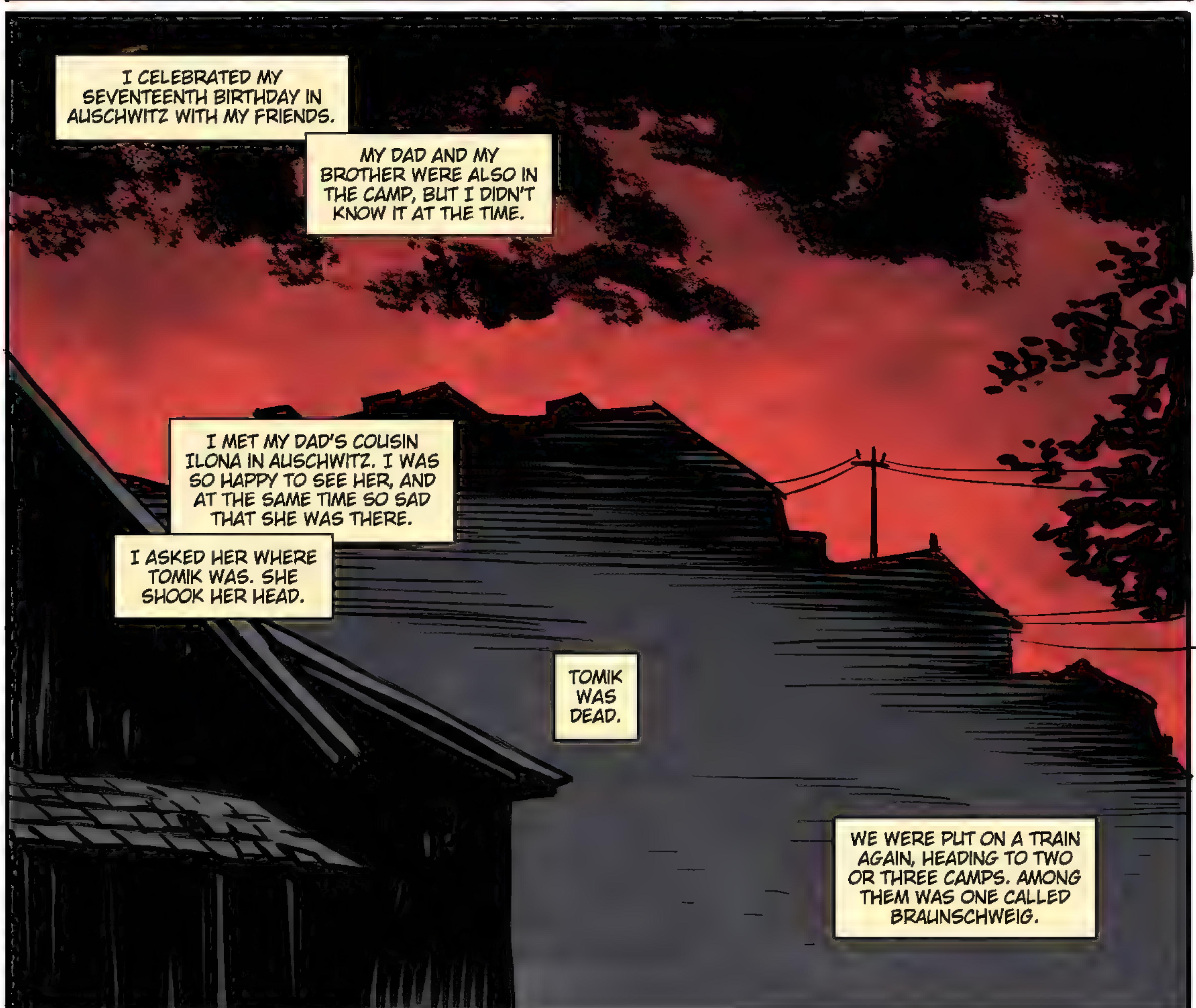
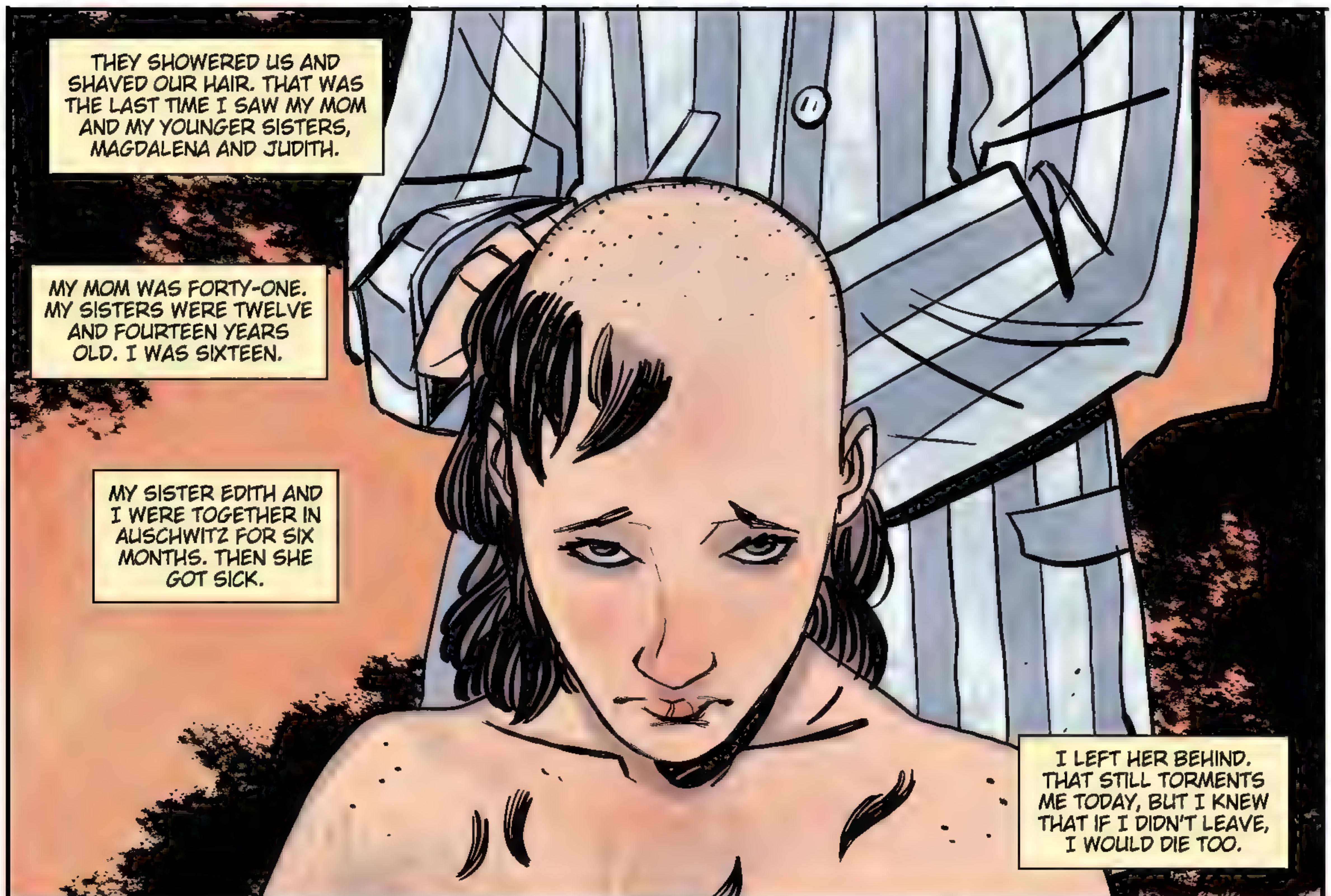
I DIDN'T THINK. I
JUST FOLLOWED
EVERYONE ELSE.

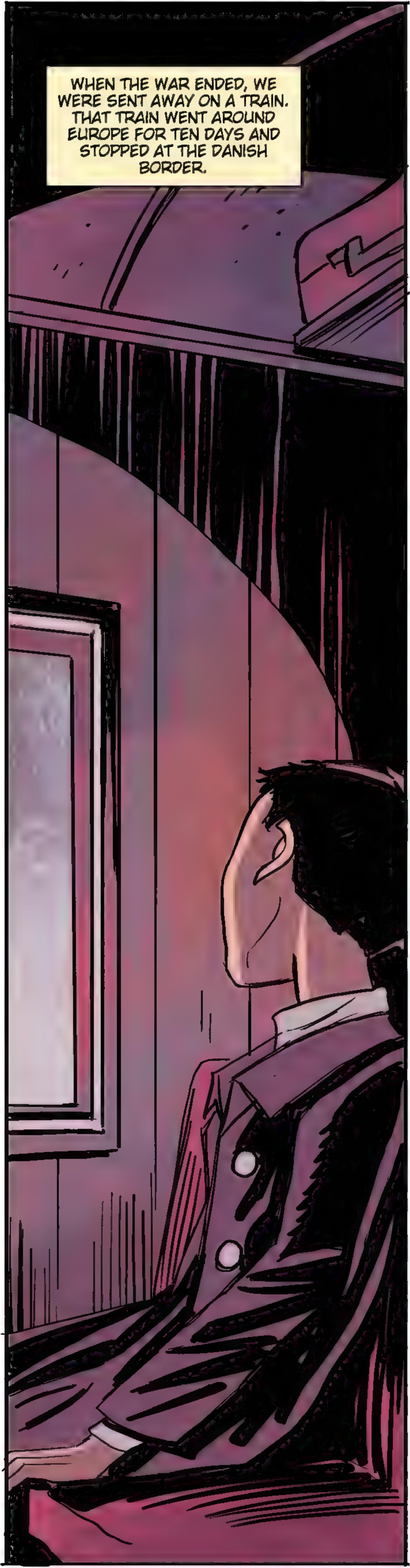
THEY TOLD US TO THROW
OUR BAGS INTO A PILE.

MANY RAN TO THE PILE
TO PICK SOMETHING OUT,
SOME SMALL MEMORY.

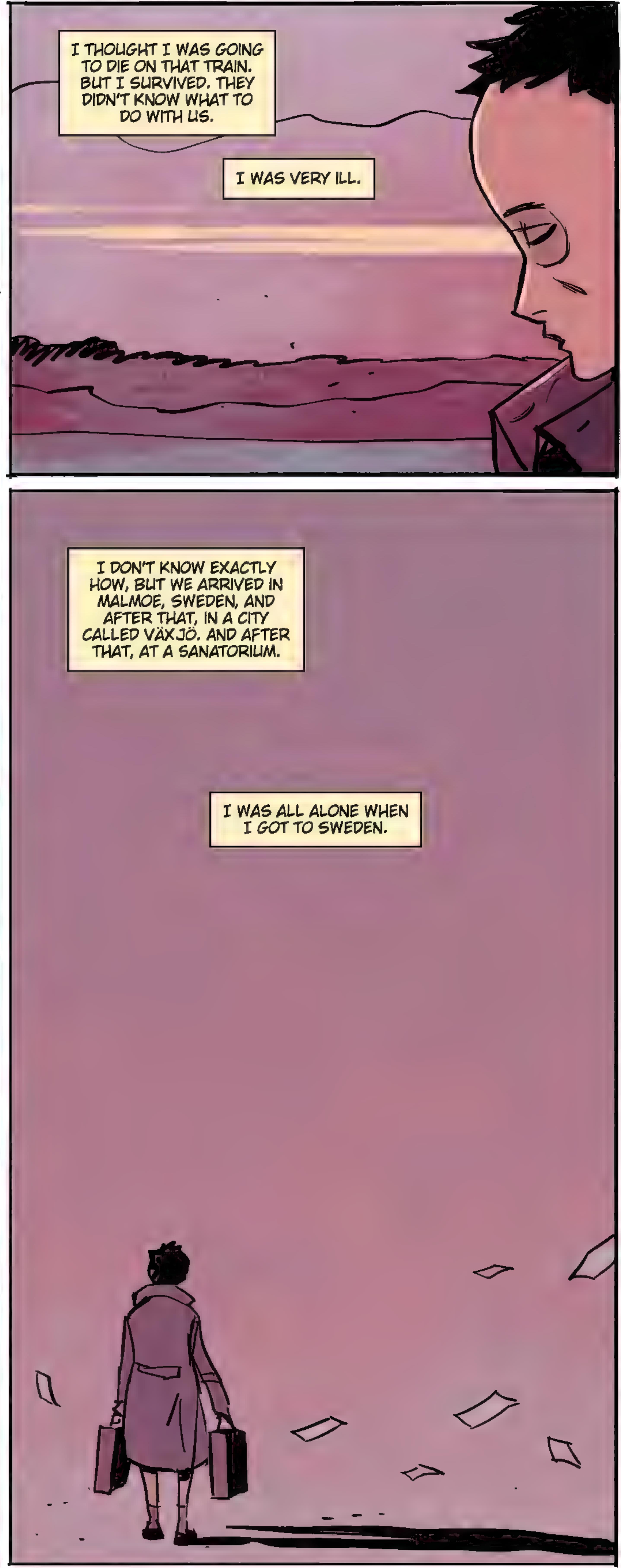
THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY
BEATEN. IT COST SOME
OF THEM THEIR LIVES.
I SNUCK MY BRACELET
INTO MY SHOE.

BUT THEY TOOK
MY SHOES TOO.





WHEN THE WAR ENDED, WE WERE SENT AWAY ON A TRAIN. THAT TRAIN WENT AROUND EUROPE FOR TEN DAYS AND STOPPED AT THE DANISH BORDER.



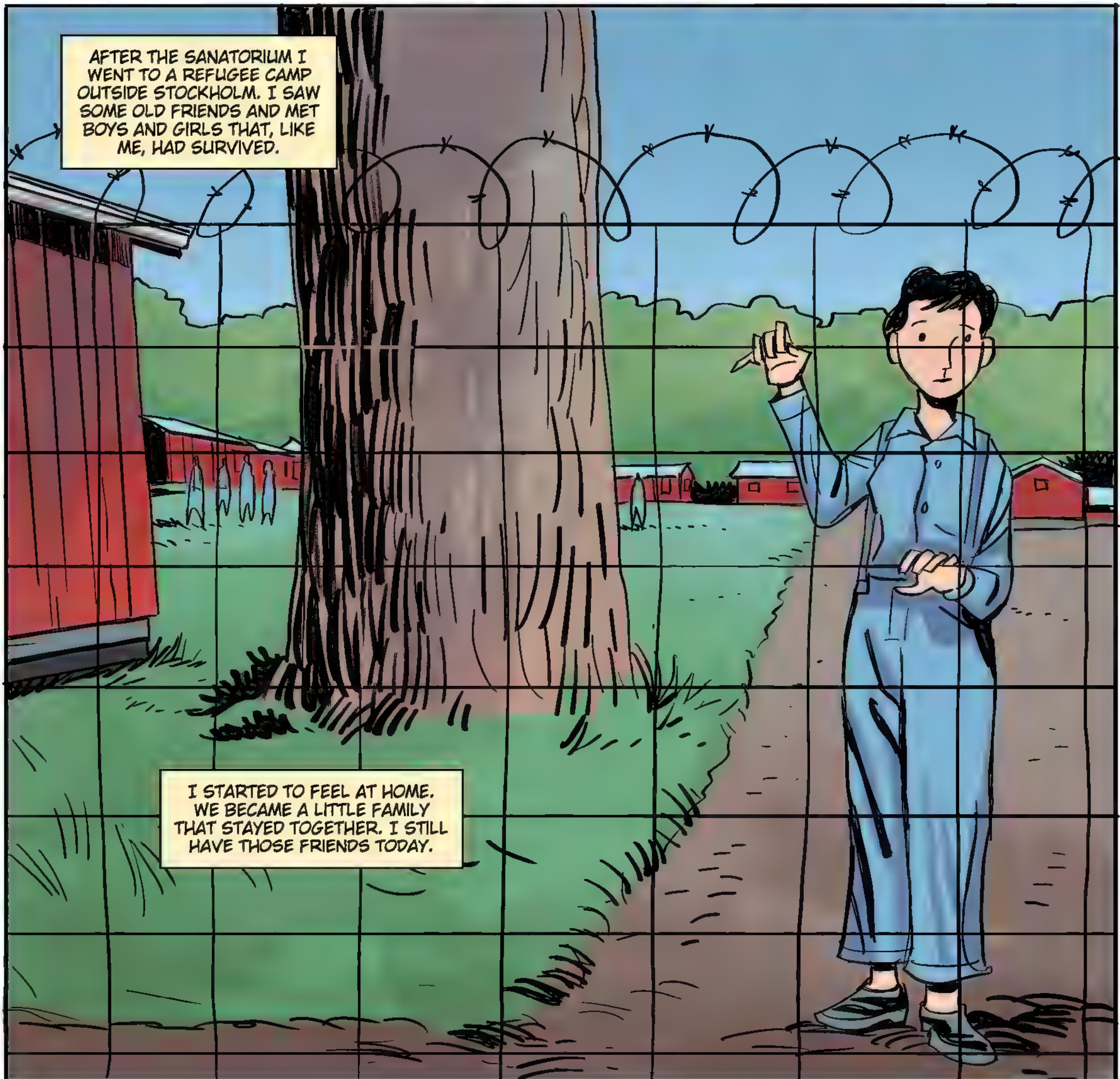
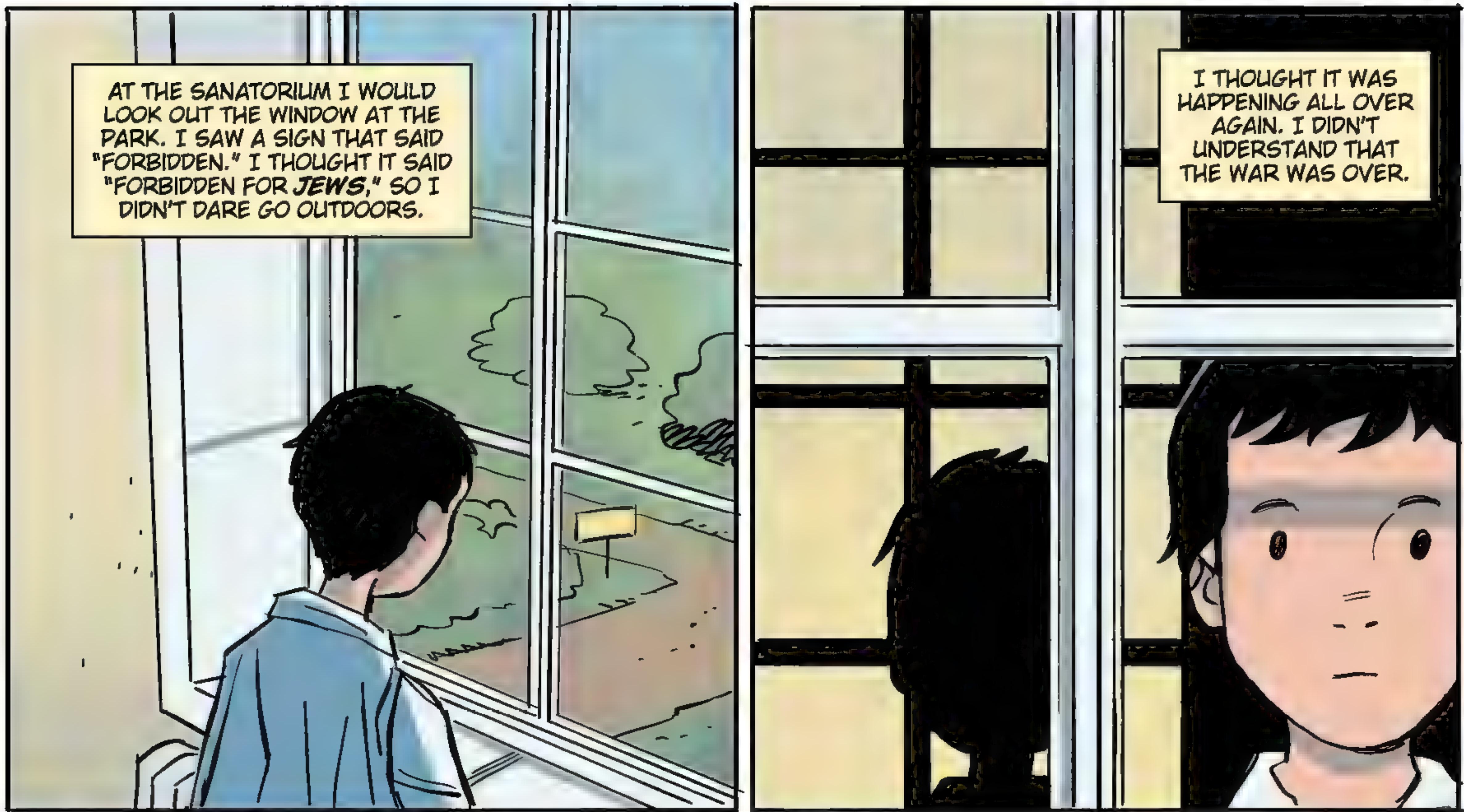
I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE ON THAT TRAIN. BUT I SURVIVED. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH US.

I WAS VERY ILL.

I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY HOW, BUT WE ARRIVED IN MALMOE, SWEDEN, AND AFTER THAT, IN A CITY CALLED VÄXJÖ. AND AFTER THAT, AT A SANATORIUM.

I WAS ALL ALONE WHEN I GOT TO SWEDEN.



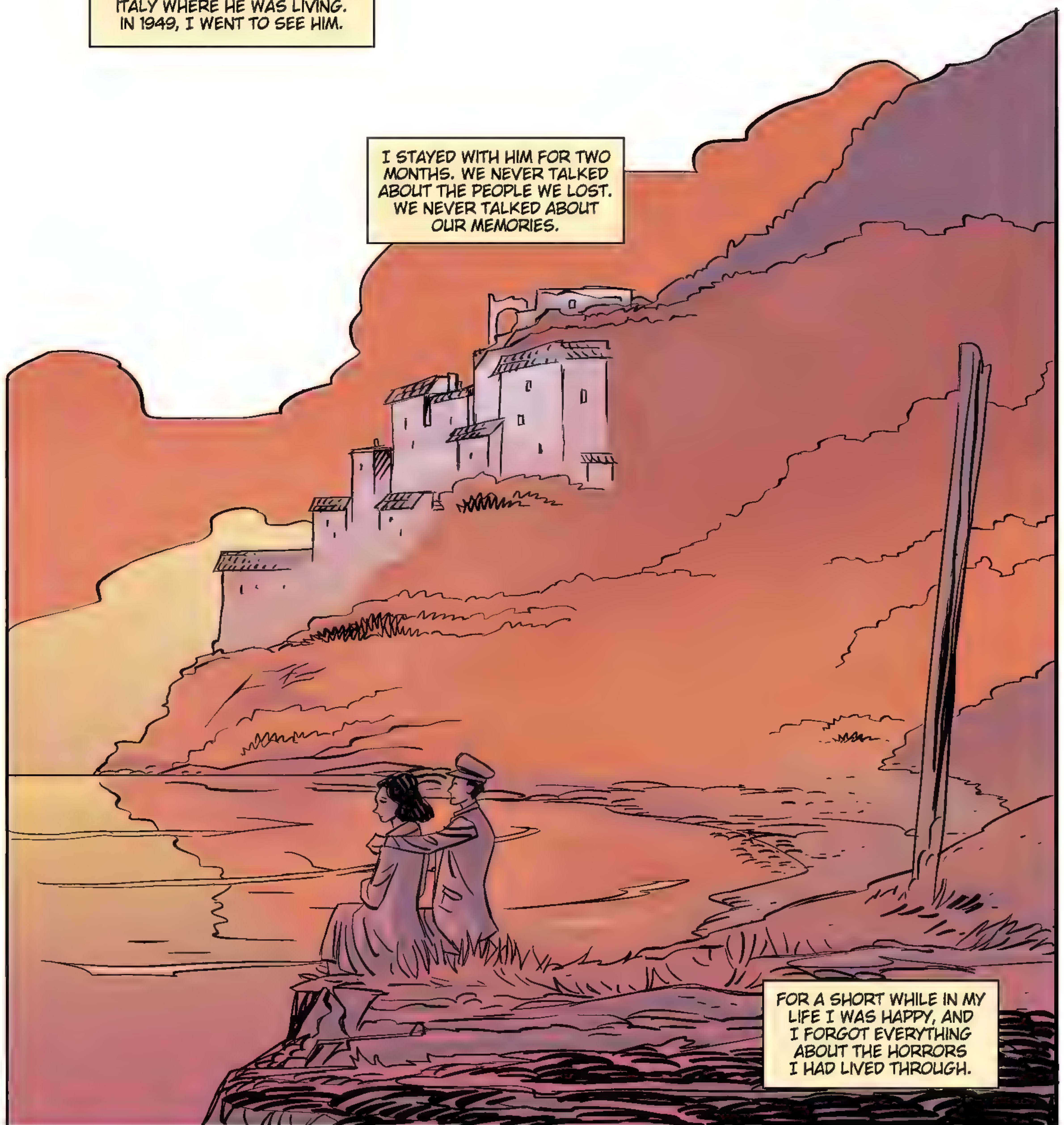


MY OLDER BROTHER EMERICH AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE EACH OTHER WERE FOR A WHOLE YEAR.

I WAITED FOR HIM TO COME BACK TO ME. DURING MY TIME IN SWEDEN I WROTE TO MY COUSIN IN PALESTINE, AND EMERICH WROTE TO HIM, TOO.

OUR COUSIN REALIZED THAT EACH OF US DIDN'T KNOW THAT THE OTHER HAD SURVIVED. HE CONNECTED US AND AFTER THAT EMERICH WROTE TO ME FROM ITALY WHERE HE WAS LIVING. IN 1949, I WENT TO SEE HIM.

I STAYED WITH HIM FOR TWO MONTHS. WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT THE PEOPLE WE LOST. WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT OUR MEMORIES.

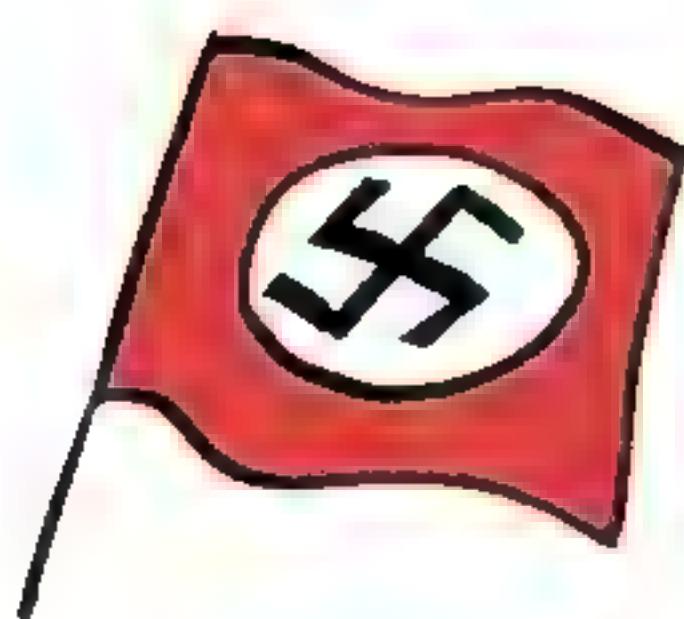


EVERYONE CARRIES
THEIR LITTLE LUGGAGE.
THIS WAS MINE.





Elisabeth Masur says that there are no words to explain the things that she has been through. She has tried to live a normal life, but her experiences have followed her everywhere. Elisabeth has two children, as well as grandchildren and great grandchildren. She says that she has had many happy times throughout her life, but she has never felt like a whole person.



TIMELINE



January 30, 1933

Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party, becomes head of the government in Germany.

1933-1935

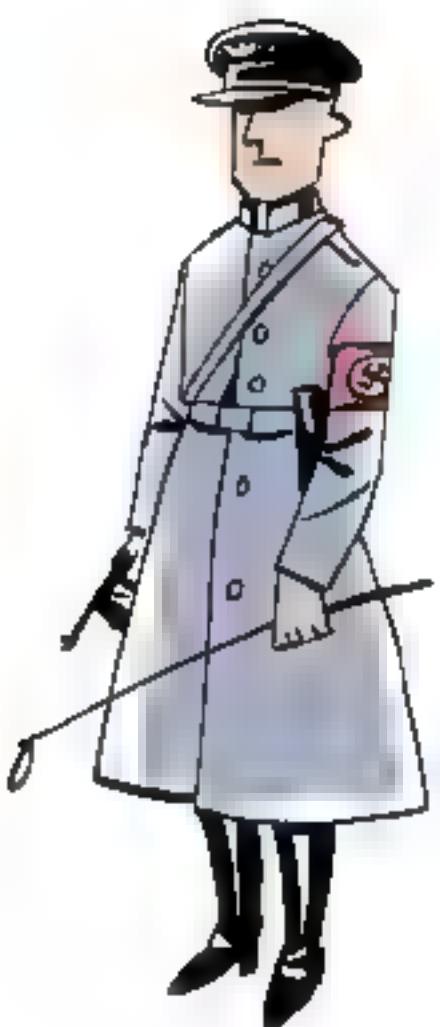
The German Parliament successfully introduces laws that isolate Jews from the rest of society, limiting their freedom and opportunities.

September 15, 1935

The Nürnberg (or Nuremberg) Laws are announced in Germany. Jews no longer have rights as German citizens. Marriage and sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews is prohibited.

March 12, 1938

German troops enter Austria.



October 28, 1938

17,000 Jews of Polish descent are forced to leave Germany for Poland.

November 9-10, 1938

Kristallnacht (Crystal Night): Jews are hunted and murdered, their property is destroyed, and synagogues are burned down all over Germany.

March 15, 1939

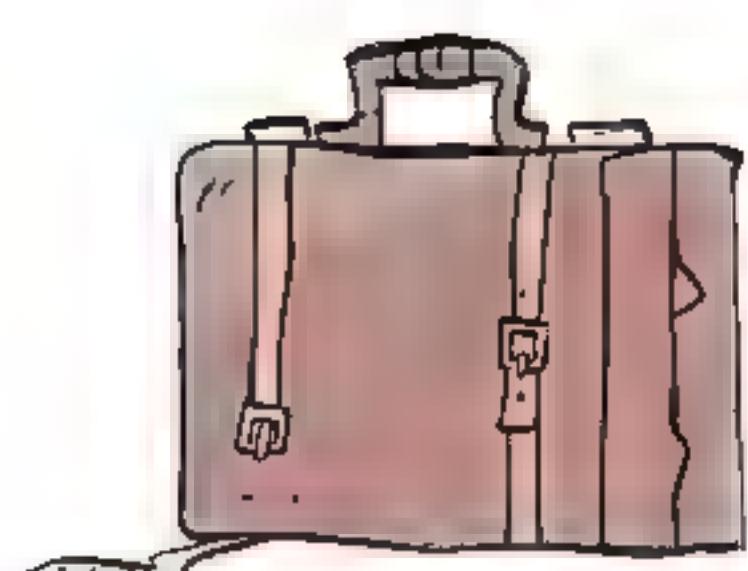
Germany invades Czechoslovakia.

September 1, 1939

Germany attacks Poland and World War II breaks out. The day after, Italy announces an alliance with Germany. Great Britain and France declare war against Germany on September 3. The Swedish government announces neutrality in the ongoing war.

September 17, 1939

The Soviet Union invades Poland from the east.



September 21, 1939

In Poland, Jews are transferred by force to specific areas called ghettos.

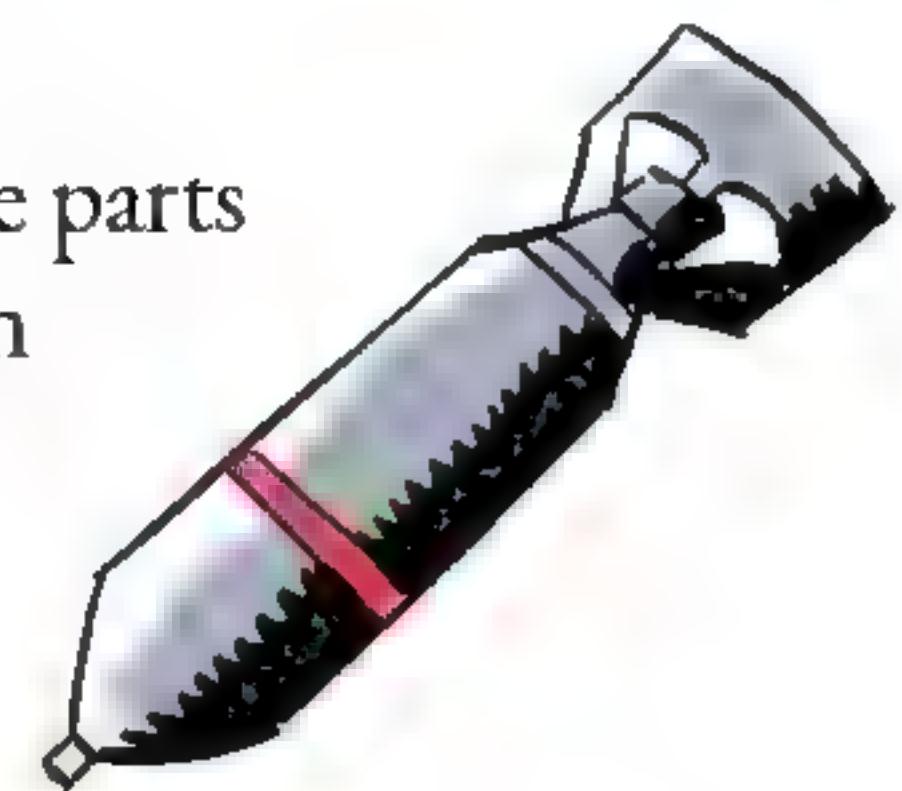
December 1, 1939

All Jews living in Poland must carry the Star of David visibly on their person. Later, that will include all Jews in Germany and in German-occupied territories.

1940

Germany invades Norway and Denmark. Sweden allows Germany to transport soldiers and weapons to and from Norway through Sweden. German troops invade Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. They continue onto France and occupy Paris.

German troops attack Britain. Large parts of London are destroyed by German bombings.



June 21, 1941

Germany attacks the Soviet Union.

December 7, 1941

The Japanese air force attacks the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor. Together with their Allies, the U.S. declares war against Japan, Germany, and Italy.

1941-1942

Six extermination camps are established in Poland by the Germans. Among them is Auschwitz-Birkenau.

January 20, 1942

German officers gather outside Berlin for the Wannsee Conference, to discuss the "Final Solution" for the "Jewish issue." The plan: to systematically exterminate the Jewish people. 74,000 Jews are sent to extermination camps.

1942-1943

German troops deport Jews from ghettos to camps. Thousands are put to death in gas chambers and through forced labor.



February 2, 1943

Soviet troops defeat the German army at Stalingrad (today Volograd).

April 19, 1943

The Warsaw Rising breaks out against German troops, the largest resistance in occupied Europe, with a significant symbolic impact.

October 1943

Sweden welcomes Danish Jews, a vast majority of which reach Sweden by boat.

March 19, 1944

Germany invades Hungary. Soon Jews are deported to Poland.

June 6, 1944

D-Day: Western Allied forces successfully march on Normandy, France. The troops continue fighting Nazi forces throughout Europe.

1944

The Soviet Union attacks German forces in Eastern Europe and makes their way through Poland where they discover several concentration camps.

Year's end, 1944-45

German forces in Poland escape the Soviet army, forcing more than 100,000 prisoners from the camps to follow, often by foot, back to Germany. Later this is called the March of Death, because of the large number of prisoners that died of exhaustion or were shot to death along the way.

1945

The Allies continue making their way through Europe, to Germany, discovering camps filled with prisoners, many so weak they die during liberation. Survivors reach Sweden with the White Buses, a Swedish rescue action coordinated by the Red Cross. Sweden welcomes 10,000 refugees to be rehabilitated at hospitals and refugee camps throughout the country.

January 27, 1945

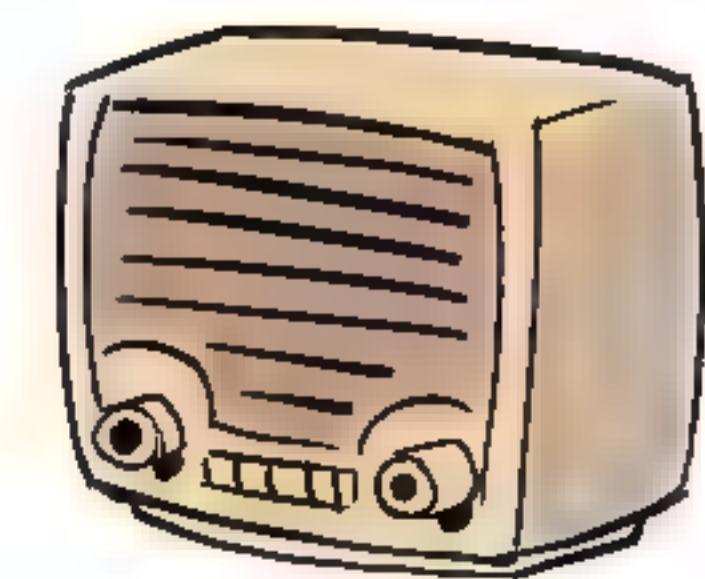
The Soviet army liberates the prisoners, mostly sick or dying, in the Auschwitz

camps. In 2005, the United Nations declares January 27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



April 30, 1945

Adolf Hitler commits suicide.



May 7-8, 1945

Germany surrenders. The war is over in Europe.

July 17-August 2, 1945

The Allied powers disarm Germany, their war industries are destroyed, and those responsible for the crimes against humanity stand for an international military court of law. Germany is divided into four zones of occupation controlled by Britain, the U.S., France, and the Soviet Union.

Summer 1945

Throughout Europe, refugee camps are established to help prisoners and survivors of the Holocaust. Slowly, survivors find their way back into everyday life. Bureaus are established to help people find family and friends that also survived, and to help re-establish their lives.

August 1945

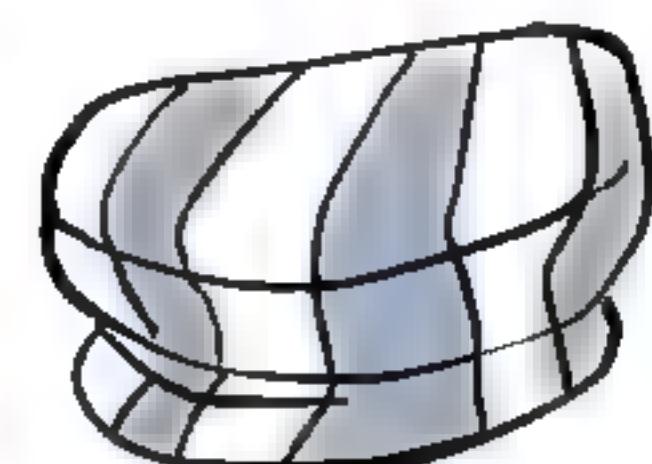
The U.S. drops nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. Hundreds of thousands are killed, and Japan surrenders. World War II comes to an end.

October 24, 1945

The United Nations is formed and its statutes adopted.

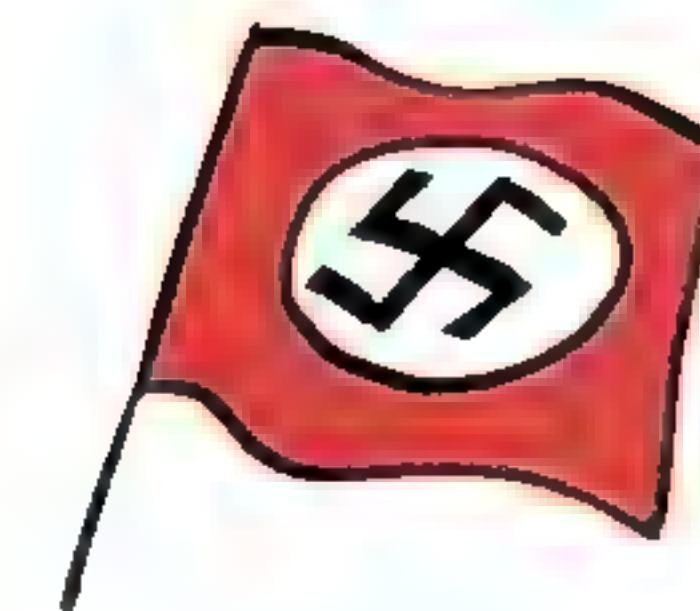
November 20, 1945

An international trial in Nürnberg (Nuremberg) against the German war criminals commences. Other trials follow.





GLOSSARY



Allies: Military alliance during World War II between nations united against Germany, Italy, and Japan. The Allied nations included France, Poland, the United Kingdom, and later the Soviet Union, the United States, and China.

Antisemitism: Prejudices and hostility against Jewish people.

Concentration camps: Camps where prisoners were forced to labor and kept locked away, because of their political views, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or criminality.

Crystal Night (Kristallnacht): Persecution of Jews on the nights of November 9-10, 1938. Many Jews were murdered, thousands were arrested, and their homes, businesses, and synagogues were destroyed.

Deport: To expel or forcefully transfer people from one area to another.

Disinfect: To clean material or humans using chemicals so that infectious agents or diseases are not transmitted.

Extermination camps: Camps with the purpose of committing mass murder, primarily through gas chambers. During World War II, the Nazi Germans created six extermination camps in Poland where mostly Jews, but also Romanians and other groups, were murdered.

Gas chamber: Rooms in some extermination camps where the Nazis committed mass murder using exhaust from cars or poisoned gas.

Ghetto: During World War II, ghettos were used for creating isolated and restricted living areas for Jews. Romanians were also sometimes placed there.

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945): Leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party and political leader of Germany from 1934-1945.

Holocaust: The Nazi genocide of Jews, Romanians, the disabled, and dissidents.

March of Death: Marches that prisoners were forced to walk as the SS emptied all concentration camps, because the Allies were closing in on them in 1945. A large number of the prisoners died from starvation, exhaustion, or were shot to death.

Mengele, Josef (1911-1979): Chief Doctor in the concentration camp in Auschwitz. He performed reckless experiments on the prisoners, and selected which Jews would go straight to the gas chambers when arriving to Auschwitz.

National Socialist German Workers Party: German Political Party from 1920 to 1945. Also called the Nazi Party. A German political movement with an anti-democratic ideology. The Nazis wanted to create a German fellowship that did not include Jews, Romanians, homosexuals, dissidents, or disabled people.

Occupation: When one country takes over a place or a group of people in another country by force.

Rationing cards/tickets: Coupons to buy things like food when supplies grow scarce during war.

SS: The Schutzstaffel, or Protection Squad, a Nazi military organization in Germany during the years of 1925-1945. They started off as body guards for Adolf Hitler, but quickly expanded their

power, promoting the Nazi ideology and supervising the extermination of the Jews.

Star of David: Jewish symbol, a six-pointed star. From 1935 and onwards, Nazis forced Jews to wear a yellow star of David on their clothes.

Surrender: To give up in a conflict.

Swastika: Symbol for the National Socialist German Workers Party; in 1933, it became the official symbol of the German realms.

Synagogue: Jewish congregation hall for services.

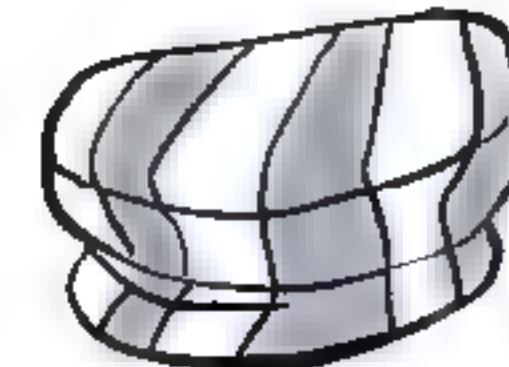
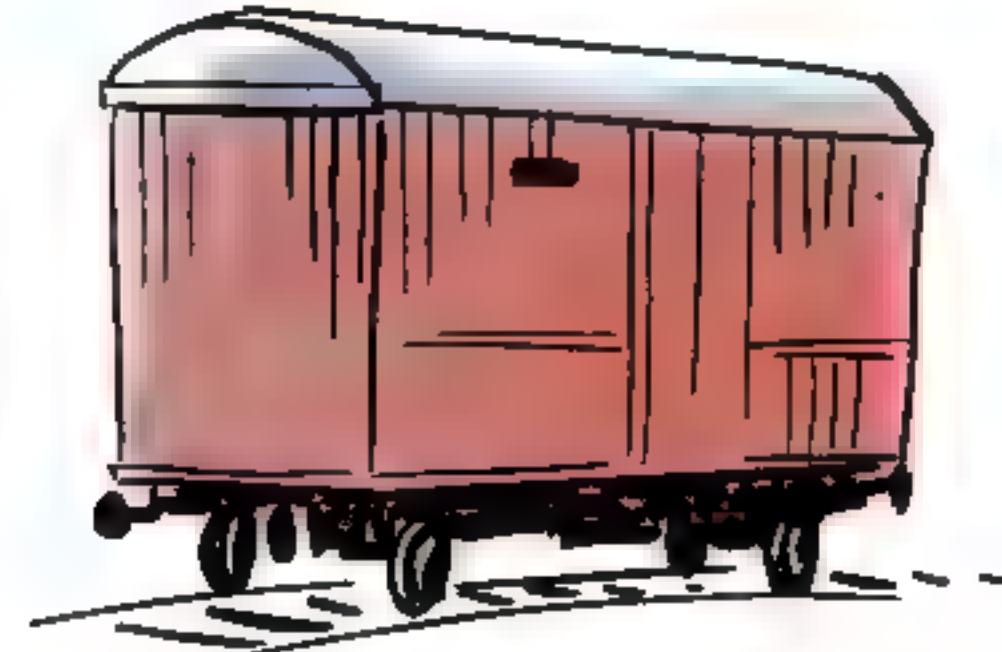
Tuberculosis: Disease in which the lungs are attacked by bacteria; curable with penicillin and other medical treatment.

Typhus: A common disease during World War II among soldiers and in ghettos and in camps. Deadly if not treated.

United Nations (UN): Created by the Allies as World War II ended, founded to work for international peace. Almost every country in the world now has members in the UN.

White busses: A mission by the Red Cross to transport survivors of camps at the end of the war, to Sweden and other places.

Yiddish: Language spoken by the majority of Jews in central and eastern Europe before World War II.



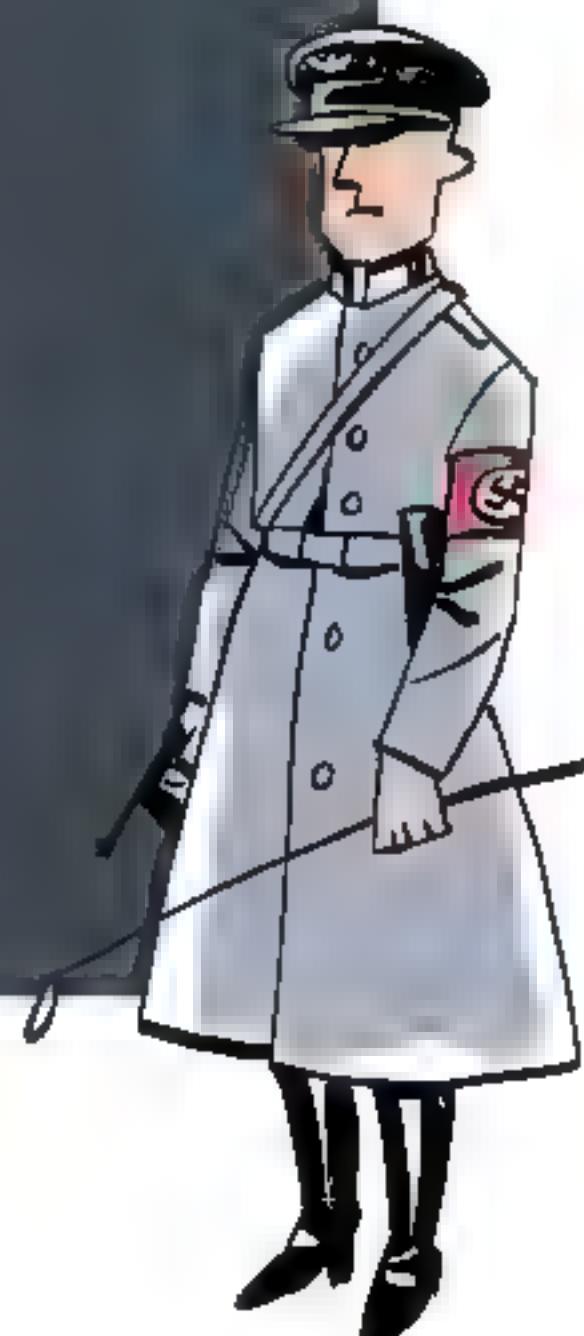
DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?

This book is inspired by *Survivors of the Holocaust* by Kate Schackelton, Zane Whittingham, and Ryan Jones, published by The Watts Publishing group.

Some of the information in this book is taken from Living History Forum and the Swedish Antisemitism Committee. Visit their home pages to learn more:

www.levandehistoria.se
www.skma.se

And in the United States:
<https://aboutholocaust.org/about/>



SPECIAL THANKS

Tobias Rawet
Livia Fränkel
Selma Bengtsson
Susanna Christensen
Emerich Roth
Elisabeth Masur

For having the strength to tell those of us who were not there about your experiences, so that we can tell it to the generations that come after us.

Thank you to the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism, the Living History Forum, the Association of Holocaust Survivors in Sweden, and the Order of the Teaspoon, for your missions to inform, educate, and explore with future generations how they can make better decisions, be brave, and make the world a better place.

Thank you, Jonna Wolff.

Thank you, Suzanne Kaplan.

Thank you, Ingrid Lomfors.

Thank you, Marie, for giving me this opportunity, and to Peter, for giving these stories life.

Thank you, Kerstin, for making this understandable.

—JBB



To Scott Allie for making me a better artist.
Without your feedback over the years this book simply
wouldn't have been possible.



To all the folks at Dark Horse Comics
for crafting this edition. You rock, as always!



To Chris Golden for allowing me to hone
my craft together with a great writer over so many books.

To Katii O'Brien and Jenny Blenk
for the continued heartfelt feedback on my art.

To Marie Augustsson and Jessica Bab Bonde
for picking me as artist for this book.

To our team at Natur och Kultur
who crafted the Swedish edition.

And to all of the survivors,
for allowing me to be a small part of your story.
Your voices will live with me forever.

—PB



Europe during
World War II,
1939 borders

NORWAY

SWEDEN

DENMARK

NETHERLANDS

BELGIUM

FRANCE

SWITZERLAND

ITALY

YUGOSLAVIA

ESTONIA

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

GERMANY

POLAND

SLOVAKIA

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

Stockholm

Malmö

Ravensbrück

Bergen-Belsen

Berlin

Buchenwald

Theresienstadt

Frankfurt

Strasshof

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Košice

Vinogradov

Sighet

Cluj

Szeged

Makó

Concentration camp

City

U.S.S.R



THE STORIES OF SIX CHILDREN WHO WATCHED EUROPE DESCEND INTO TYRANNY

Sweden's most internationally renowned graphic novel.

As right-wing extremism and antisemitism are evoked once again, stories like these are the alarm-bell needed to remind us never to forget the horrors of the Holocaust. *We'll Soon Be Home Again* is based on interviews with six Holocaust survivors, their stories a moving cry for compassion, as each one is stripped of their possessions and lose their loved ones and their dignity, living through their persecutions in the ghetto, the de-humanization and the starvation in the concentration camps, and the industrial-scale mass murder taking place in the extermination camps.

"Trucks drove into the ghetto and took all of the sick people from the hospitals. They went from house to house and took all of the elderly people, everyone unable to work, and all children under ten years old."



"By the end of August 1942, all children under ten were supposed to be handed over."



SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...
THIS MONSTER!"

